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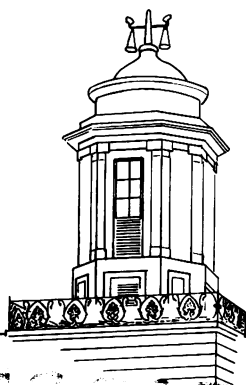
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CRIME AND THE SUPERNATURAL

This is the first book to be written on the relationship of crime to the supernatural. The author has made a special study of crimes that have been characterized by "things not of this world." Many cases are surrounded by inexplicable circumstances, and he reveals that what some may call either "fate" or "chance," can also be interpreted as psychic and occult influences.

Written in a clear, common-sense style, the book at once grips the reader's interest. Much courage is needed to explore, and ability to elucidate, one of the most difficult subjects in the world—the supernatural; and we feel that Mr. Woodhall, who has distinguished himself with previous books, is to be congratulated on his absorbing investigation.

By the same Author :

**SPIES OF THE GREAT WAR
GUARDIANS OF THE GREAT
DETECTIVE AND SECRET SERVICE DAYS
SECRETS OF SCOTLAND YARD**

(Course of preparation)

SECRET KILLING

CRIME AND THE SUPERNATURAL

BY

EDWIN T. WOODHALL

*Late, New Scotland Yard,
also Intelligence (Contre-espionage)
Secret Service H.M. Forces on Active Service*

With 22 Illustrations

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First Published October 1935

I INSCRIBE THIS BOOK TO
MEMORIES

MEMORIES I retain, of one of the
most beautiful natures it has been
my fortune to encounter in this life.
Namely—Ada Maria Coverdale—
beloved old "Mate"—whose great
soul "passed over" on June 14th,
1932

INTRODUCTION

IN writing this book—or rather more about the theme of it, namely the psychic!—I have been actuated by the thought that many great minds have gone into the question. Thus leaving the subject open for any who care to tackle and delve into the phenomena—possibly—a little further?

The psychic was accepted by such scientific minds as Huxley, Tyndall, Dryson, Lord Kelvin, Sir William Crooks, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Alfred Russell, Wallace, Meyers, Lombroso, etc., as well as our present-day great men such as Sir Oliver Lodge, etc.

All investigators of no more than a century. There are names prior to this period. Going back step by step through the ages until the advent of Christianity. Then again along the misty halls of time to thousands of years before this era.

I tried to find out if such an instance of its acceptance was made by the Ancients, anywhere in records of World History.

My search was rewarded.

Two great names loom out as a proof that the phenomena of the psychic was accepted very early in the Dawn of Civilization. Names that have been upon the lips of millions upon millions in the past: and will still be yet to come in the future from millions upon millions yet unborn.

Namely, those two great pagan scholars Pluto and

15317-69

Socrates. Others of the Greek school of Ancient Civilization refer to it—but these two will suffice, the latter in particular, for it is from Pluto out of the work *Phædo* that we find reference to it by Socrates.

Immediately before Socrates drank the cup of poison (hemlock), he developed the grounds of his immovable conviction of the *immortality of the soul*. He died with composure and cheerfulness in his seventieth year, 400 B.C.

Two peculiarities distinguished Socrates. (1) His long life passed in contented poverty and in public dialectics. (2) His persuasion of a special religious mission. He had been accustomed constantly to hear, even from his childhood, a divine voice—interfering, at moments when he was about to act, in the way of restraint—but never in the way of instigation.

Such prohibitory warning was wont to come upon him very frequently, not merely on great, but even on small, occasions, intercepting what he was about to do or say. Though later writers speak of this as the Dæmon or Genius of Socrates, he himself does not personify it, but treats it merely as a "*divine sign, a prophetic or supernatural voice.*" He was accustomed not only to obey it implicitly, but to speak of it publicly and familiarly to others—so that the fact was well known both to his friends and to his enemies.

Such then of Socrates.

Immortal classic of Ancient Greek Civilization. One, with no religion, who lived four hundred years before the Coming of Christ and advent of Christianity.

If it was true of him? What of it from others of to-day—the future? In this work—as it stands—the same theme is touched upon.

With deep deference, I can only hope it will meet with approval.

If so, I shall indeed be compensated for the first account I know of in this country—that is termed, and quite rightly, *Crime and the Supernatural*.

Author, West Kensington, 1935.

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CRIME AND THE SUPERNATURAL

CHAPTER I

The Supernatural or "Unknown." Some general considerations—an appeal to facts. Toxicologists, pathologists, chemists, graphologists, firearm or ballistic experts come to the aid of police detection in murder. Does the future hold a place for yet another scientific expert—the psychometrist? Shooting and murder in the East End of London. Two young Scotland Yard detectives and a psychometrist. A Jewish tailor claiming these powers. An experiment by him with an empty cartridge case ejected from a murderer's automatic pistol. The vivid eerie "divination" concerning a man with a "drooping moustache"—also the dimly lighted room and a body on a blood-stained bed. What the police discovered—also what followed.

IS there a place in the future police criminal investigation departments of the world for the clairvoyant?

Why not?

The real question is: Can those who practise the occult find clues which detectives cannot discover?

Has science yet proved that death is merely a stage—an "etheric" line of demarcation—between a physical and spiritual existence?

Sir Oliver Lodge, the most respected scientist in the whole Empire on spiritualism—if not the whole world—gave millions of silent listeners in his farewell broadcast on March 10th, 1934, his last views upon the subject. In words hardly to be forgotten by those who heard them he gave this message:

"The veil between the two worlds is wearing thin. It is possible, given the right conditions, to communicate with those we call the dead," etc. Further, this great

scientist maintained the ether is the one great reality. For about ten minutes only just recently Sir Oliver made a prophecy concerning the future of the world.

The present century, which has made many important discoveries in physics, seeks to discredit and deny the ether. But the twenty-first century will discover that it is the beginning and the end of all things—that which lies behind and, indeed, makes possible the existence of our physical life and mind.

Sir Oliver also stated to the Press that it was our ether bodies—or etheric shapes—which permeate our physical bodies and which survive us after death.

He said he thought communication with the ether bodies would progress and become a daily matter of course—once we understood the ether.

He was filmed as he made it, but the reel is not for the public. It will be locked away in archives after it has been shown in every engineering and scientific institute as one of the series of scientific prophecies by the leading physicists of the day.

Here is the gist of his simple message. . . . I cannot hope, says the chronicler, it will reach you with the full significance with which it reached those in the studio who were deeply stirred by his Jove-like appearance and sincerity. But will it be proved in A.D. 2000 ?

“The ether which surrounds us,” said Sir Oliver, “is the one great reality. Invisible and leaving no impression upon the senses, it is the substance which holds the universe together, in which the stars are embedded and all other matter—that mere discontinuous collection of atoms. But I have not been able to progress much in my communications with the ether bodies—or so-called dead. But my faith remains.”

Bearing out Sir Oliver's statement, many people in many places claim that they possess the power of getting in touch with the dead, one of the best known methods in use by these people being that known as “psychic contact.” If they can see and touch anything which belonged to the dead person they are

affected by some strange force and are gifted with what is generally known as "second sight." Such a person is known among spiritualists as a psychometrist.

I will give an example to illustrate the help that might be given in unravelling a murder mystery, assuming such possibilities ever come into future use to aid crime detection.

A revolver is found. The police call in a psychometrist. This expert examines the scene of the crime and handles the weapon. When the weapon of the murderer is placed into the psychometrist's hands he will, as it were, pass from the bounds of his own physical body and gain contact with the "ethereal existence" or spirit shape of the dead.

However, before I go any farther, I know of no actual instance where this has happened. That is, where the police have resorted to the aid of psychometry—and as a result of such super-normal faculties—a crime has been detected. But in regard to dreams or "premonitions" cases abound in real life of many kinds. Some of which I shall tell as I go along through these chapters.

Some time back one of our national daily newspapers printed such an account in connection with the White-chapel atrocities of 1883, referred to in Chapter III, which is an unearthly and gruesome description.

However, all things taken into consideration, the undeniable fact remains that many strange, unaccountable, and remarkable things have happened in regard to crime, another national Sunday newspaper trying out psychometry by means of a Miss Gene Dennis in the recent No. 1 Brighton Trunk Murder Case, with results that so far as the public know were announced at the time.

The "unknown" has throughout the ages intrigued human nature. The records of events after death abound with examples in which second sight, clairvoyance, telepathy and spiritualism have been brought into use in some cases with success when all normal human efforts have failed.

Shakespeare made use of the supernatural to solve

his murders in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. There is also the classic story of *Maria Martin or the Murder in the Red Barn*, *Corsican Brothers*, as well as many other stories in which this strong theme of "The Unknown" runs through the narration and grips the imagination. The last no doubt by the immortal Alexandre Dumas inspired from the first French school of the occult and the Second French Commission held by their scientists upon Animal Magnetism, when Mesmer, its first exponent, proved that "Mesmerism," as it was then called, was a power which could be exercised by one person's mind upon that of another.

Carried on and perfected by the English school with Doctor Braid of Manchester as the most prominent, who introduced the word we now have for this study or practice, called "hypnotism."

To-day it is commonly admitted by the whole medical profession, especially in the Institute of Medical Psychology, when psycho-analysis and other treatments are suggested to patients, either with or without hypnotism by what is called occupational therapy, the curative result achieved in many cases to persons suffering from nervous and other diseases of the mind being remarkable.

Yet, apart from facts, and going back again to written accounts of the occult, vivid and realistic as all these stories are, they remain stories—not facts!—they cannot, therefore, be brought forward as REAL instances in which the occult and the supernatural have come definitely to the aid of the living in the detection of crime.

The study of "psychic phenomena" or, if you like, "second sight," is no new one and is bound by no *known* rules. The belief, faith, intuition, or premonition of the uninitiated may be just as trustworthy, just as good, and arrive at the rock-bottom facts just as well or better than the powers of the professional medium, student, or scientist.

Human nature is very complex, but normal men and women may be relied on to think and act along well-marked lines. It is the abnormal who think and act

otherwise. In this country alone, many eminent and distinguished names are to be found of men and women in all walks and denominations of life among those who have made a life-long study of the subject of psychic powers. Along with this great body of pioneers, groping ever so steadily forward, comes the charlatan, the fraud, who exploits for fame or cash the real work of enlightenment which is being done by those who are utterly sincere. One *new fact* made clear to science is like one brick made, laid and cemented. This concrete evidence far outweighs all the fantastic and fictional stories, no matter from what source they emanate or by whatever authority or group of authorities they are brought forward. A few representative names in this country are, of course, those of Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, Sir William Barrett, and the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In Germany, France, Austria, Italy, the United States—indeed, throughout the entire world, the advancing line of thought and investigation of the occult is a factor which must be taken into consideration.

Man's ever-increasing thirst for knowledge is one of the great natural impulses that, through the ages, goes to make up an ever-changing universe. And it must be admitted that his investigations are slowly but surely leading him to enlightenment regarding "Spiritualism": an enlightenment which, I prophesy, will, within these next two generations, alter the outlook of the whole world as regards "The Unknown."

Nearly all psychometrists at the time of "contact" lapse into a form of catalepsy or trance. I have seen many in my time, and in the early days of my novitiate as a detective regarded this phase with suspicion. But sights and encounters in the Great War, combined with police detective experience, and my training since as a crime-writing author, have brought me to a less cocksure opinion about many things that occur in the occult world and which are *misunderstood*. I *know* that some beings possess a sense, a latent sense, an "electric presence,"—call it what one likes—that others do not possess. It is a phenomenon which is

not yet understood but when it is, then it will be no uncommon thing to see a psychometrist helping the police to elucidate problems beyond normal human faculties.

It must not be thought that psychic sensitiveness is the possession only of the cultured. Many people in lowly walks of life possess gifts of this kind as acute and reliable as any bestowed on their more fortunate brethren. They may not have ever heard of such words as clairvoyance, psychometry, cryptesthesia, mediumship, but they do intuitively, and sometimes timorously feel that they possess a power of reception and perception which is denied to the generality of people.

Let me instance an idea of what I mean—the station of life of the person does not count, it's the example that matters.

For an authority I quote sensible Beverley Nichols.

"It sounds quite absurd, of course, like the crudest thriller that ever came off the printing presses. But I have just had an extraordinary instance of telepathy.

"At the Gare de Lyons early this week I met an old friend, a diplomat, who was just going to Rome by the night train. We dined together. Quite casually he asked me during dinner if I would excuse him for a few moments while he got into touch with a friend of his in London who was seriously ill.

"Thinking he wanted to telephone, I said to him, 'You will have to hurry. It takes a good half-hour to get through to London at this time of night.' He smiled and shook his head. 'I do not need to telephone,' he said. And he took out of his waistcoat pocket a little case which contained a little ball of platinum, about the size of a cherry hanging on a silver chain. 'I can find out all I need with this.'

"I stared at him. If I had not known him as a distinguished diplomat and a keen sportsman as well, I should have thought him mad. For there, in the crowded restaurant, with waiters hurrying by and corks popping, he reached for his dispatch-case, took out a letter, smoothed it on the table, and dangled the

little ball of platinum above it. He closed his eyes. I watched the ball. Nothing happened. I watched his face again, he seemed to be growing very pale. He stayed like that for nearly a minute. The ball did not swing, and then suddenly it fell from his fingers and rolled on the floor.

"When I had rescued it from under the table, he had already risen to his feet. He looked white and distraught.

" 'Forgive me,' he said, 'but I must go out.' When he came back he said : 'I had to send a telegram to the boy's mother. She is one of my oldest friends.'

" 'But . . . Has anything happened ?'

" 'He is dead.'

"He took the letter, glanced at it, shook his head, and put it back into the dispatch-case. We finished our dinner in silence.

"This morning I received a letter from him. In it he says : 'I was just too late. "X" died at ten minutes past seven. You will remember that we sat down to dinner at twenty past.'

"Believe me or not, I can't invent stories like that. Sometimes I wish I could."

I would not take the trouble to quote this fact, but Mr. Beverley Nichols is a young man—and it is from the younger generation I prefer my backing.

This intuitive sense is, however, on the side of premonition, of which I believe there are four thousand cases upon record. That is warnings "Before Death" —"At the time of Death," and "After Death."

Psychometry is different but, strange as it may sound, closely related to this sense. For it produces the same kind of divination in a living person by the "psychic contact" of touch. It is on record that a Frau Lottie Plaat, a Continental psychometrist, once declared that she had been murdered seven times in one day, having touched photographs of seven of the victims of the Düsseldorf murderer—and experienced the deaths they had suffered.

Such a case on these lines was that of a poor Jewish tailor in the East End of London, who provided the

police with an amazing example of clairvoyance which was subsequently verified to the smallest detail.

The story has never before been told ; it occurred many years ago, but the incident is indelibly impressed on my memory as I write from the old notes taken at the time it happened.

In 1910 Houndsditch was the scene of the brutal murder of three unarmed policemen by an alien gang of safe-breaking criminals. Houndsditch is on the border line of the areas controlled by the City and the Metropolitan Police, but the whole forces of both bodies were sent out to trace the murderers, who had made good their escape.

Many officers of both detective staffs took part in this man hunt, but, with the exception of a few cartridge cases left on the scene of the crime and in the road outside, the police had absolutely no clues which would lead them to the murderers.

One man—a Jew—certainly came forward and said that he had seen two men and a woman leading a third man who looked as if he had been seriously hurt, but when he, out of curiosity, had followed them, one of the gang had come up to him and hissed in his face that he would shoot him dead if he dared to follow the group another inch, emphasizing his determination by prodding the frightened man's stomach with a large automatic pistol.

Inspector Wensley, later Chief Constable Wensley of the C.I.D., New Scotland Yard, was at this time taking part in the investigation. No man had a more intimate and accurate knowledge of the alien criminal population of the East End, except several of the members of Special " Political " Branch headquarters.

On the night of the murders I was sent post-haste to Whitechapel to meet the late Detective-Sergeant Laurence Seal at Aldgate East Station. He belonged to the Special Branch, and was, incidentally, one of the best detectives at " shadowing " the Yard possessed at the time. I had an official instruction to give him concerning the crime, which was, as I have said,



Sidney Street.

The end! Police removing in coffins remains of the armed gunmen.

engrossing the attention of every member of the London police.

Seal turned up to meet me in the characteristic garb of an East End "down and out." He had been living for over a week in a common lodging-house in Shadwell, engaged in observations connected with the pre-war Russian Nihilist revolutionary movement.

While we were talking, a man came up and entered into conversation. He was well-known to both of us, and was reputed to have curious psychic abilities. He began to talk of the murders, and Seal asked him, in a jocular sort of way, if he could help us in the matter. I am sure that Seal did not expect to be taken seriously. It was the last of his thoughts. To our surprise, the man nodded.

"Yes, I can help," he said confidently, "providing you give me something that either the dead men or the murderers have handled."

We looked at him, thinking he was joking; but the serious and determined look on his face showed that he was in earnest.

For a moment or two Seal and I stood aside; I gave him the fresh instructions, we shook hands, and he and the other man left me and walked in the direction of the Commercial Road.

Seal and Inspector Wensley were, as far as I knew, unacquainted with each other. Wensley was an East End man, while Seal was at headquarters.

When I left Seal and the psychometrist, they went to the scene of the murder. Seal had an empty cartridge case clip he had obtained somehow which had undoubtedly been left behind by the murderers. A detail I knew nothing about, but it had a strange bearing on what occurred which was afterwards told to me, and which came about at the other man's house in the Commercial Road. This is his story of what took place.

Seal gave him the clip when they arrived—he refused to handle it until then—and he at once could see that the man was tremendously affected. No sooner had he taken the clip in his hand, turned it

over and rubbed it for a moment or so, than he went into a kind of trance, and started speaking in a voice that was deep and resonant, a striking contrast with his ordinary voice, which was weak and thin.

"Not a mile from here," he said twice, "there are two men and a woman."

There was a long pause, then he continued.

"There is a man with a drooping black moustache. I can see him a long way off. He is coming nearer to the house. It is not a mile from here. I can see a bed . . . it is blood-stained. There is a man lying on it. The room is in darkness. The men and the woman are gone. I see the man with the black moustache. There are other men; the man on the bed is not alive. He seems all black. I cannot make him out. The man with the black moustache is looking at the man on the bed. He takes something from under the man's pillow. I see two men in a dark room -- noises! -- crowds! -- flames -- I see policemen lifting coffins."

Another pause, and then Seal told me the man seemed to regain his normal self again. His face was pale and his hands tremulous as though he had suffered an unnerving experience.

All this was told to me by my colleague on the following day, and, although I attached no importance to it at the time, each word of the little Jewish tailor's utterance proved to be correct in every detail. On the following day Wensley who, at the time, wore a drooping moustache, found the dead murderer—a man named Gardstein, or Morountzeff, on a blood-soaked bed at 59 Grove Street, not a mile away from the psychometrist's house. A woman, Sara Rosa Trassjohnsky, was caught by him feverishly burning papers in another room.

Two other murderers got away and took shelter at 100 Sidney Street, where, brought to bay by the police, they refused to surrender, and died in a holocaust of fire and flames. Both were burnt to death, choosing this rather than give themselves up to the

hated police, the latter removing their bodies from the debris—in coffins.

Underneath Gardstein's pillow was found his automatic, with a clip of ammunition from which one bullet was missing, identical with the case handled by the medium.

Another member of this infamous gang of killers was a Russian, a native of Lithuania named Piatkoff, or Schtern. He was the ringleader, and was something of a scenic artist, known as "Peter the Painter." He got clean away and fled the country, being killed by the French police in a similar kind of crime at Choissy-le-Roi near Paris. Thus was borne out in every detail by true life happenings—what was seen—so far as I know—AND BELIEVE—an occult divination of crime and the supernatural.

This account may sound strange, even incredible. There may be some who do not—and cannot reconcile themselves to the facts about what I write. If so it is to be regretted. In any case—what do I care WHO KNOW IT TO BE TRUE.

Seal and I met soon afterwards and talked the matter over. We were young men of about twenty-five, both being trained in the sordid and grim realities of life. We were constantly in and out of courts where the whole atmosphere reeks of evidence, and nothing but evidence, either of what a man has *seen* or can *prove* by documentary or substantiated facts.

Small wonder that Seal and I were silent and mystified in face of this remarkable experience that had come to us. We both knew that if we told the story to anyone at the "Yard" we should in all probability become a joke for all our more matter-of-fact and prosaic colleagues. So we kept the experience to ourselves, and it has never before been related.

CHAPTER II

The belief of the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the power of psychometry in crime detection. A case of a well-known novelist and his letter to the *Morning Post*. The case of the absent financier—missing or dead? Fate brings me into a death tragedy—alone at midnight—the terrible storm—What my colleague and I saw—the suspended horror. A clairvoyant's eerie but remarkable divination and the strange true sequel.

THE reader has already gathered that Scotland Yard does not encourage clairvoyant aid in an effort to clear up some unusually baffling mystery. Unfortunately the powers that be are very much against this form of detective work, for the reasons I shall give below.

In the first place it must be remembered that clairvoyancy is still illegal (in England, at any rate), and that there are in existence statutes under which people practising the art may be severely punished. When one considers the services rendered by mediums and clairvoyants, and their contributions to psychological research, this may appear somewhat unfair. It should be borne in mind, however, that clairvoyancy offers many lucrative opportunities to professional crooks, and that more than one criminal nest has been feathered with the proceeds of pseudo-fortune-telling. In such circumstances, therefore, the Home Office can scarcely be expected to allow their representatives to patronize illegal institutions.

The German authorities are more broad-minded, and they are quite ready to consult clairvoyants if they believe that there is the slightest chance of securing information vital to the conviction of a murderer. Of course, the clairvoyant's statement could not possibly be admitted in court, but he or she may supply the authorities with clues which, followed up, may produce the necessary evidence.

In this connection, the remarkable letter of the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to the *Morning Post* in connection with the disappearance of the famous novelist, Mrs. Agatha Christie, is of interest. It will be remembered that Mrs. Christie disappeared suddenly, and grave fears were entertained for her safety. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle approached a well-known psychometrist, and handed him a gauntlet glove owned by the missing novelist. He handled the glove and announced that the wearer would be found.

In the letter, which I quote in full below, Sir Arthur makes a point which I have stressed throughout these pages; namely, that the spirit world is against aiding the police to track criminals. None the less, it will be noticed that Sir Arthur recognizes the potential value of psychic aid. The letter reads:

To the Editor of the *Morning Post*.

Sir,

The Christie case has afforded an excellent example of the uses of psychometry as an aid to the detective. It is, it must be admitted, a power which is elusive and uncertain, but occasionally it is remarkable in its efficiency. It is often used by the French and German police, but if it is ever employed by our own it must be *sub rosa*, for it is difficult for them to call upon the very powers which the law compels them to persecute.

In this case I obtained a glove of Mrs. Christie's, and asked an excellent psychometrist for an opinion. I gave him no clue at all as to what I wanted or to whom the article belonged. He never saw it until I laid it on the table at the moment of consultation, and there was nothing to connect either it or me with the Christie case. The date was Sunday last. He at once got the name of Agatha. "There is trouble connected with this article. The person who owns it is half dazed and half purposeful. She is not dead as many think. She is alive. You will hear of her, I think, next Wednesday."

Mrs. Christie was found on Tuesday night, but it was actually Wednesday when the news reached us, so that everything in the reading, so far as I could test it (there was a good deal about character and motives which was outside my knowledge), proved to be true. The only error was that he had an impression of water, though whether the idea of a Hydro was at the bottom of this feeling is at least arguable. I sent the report on to Colonel Christie that evening.

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

Generally speaking, crime is sordid, and its detection a matter-of-fact business. The detective of fiction who, sitting in an arm-chair for an hour and a half with his finger-tips together, can solve the most abstruse murder mystery, has no prototype in real life.

Scotland Yard's work consists almost entirely of painstaking, patient and plodding investigation into all the salient facts of a case. What enemies had the man? Where were they at the time? What was the motive of the crime, and whom could that motive have driven to its committal? What known criminals were near the scene at the time of the murder?

In the vast majority of cases these matter-of-fact routine enquiries eventually secure the start for the arrest of the killer.

But, strange as it may sound, Scotland Yard, or come to that, any other detective force, scorns no source of aid, however unlikely, in its unremitting search for wrongdoers, and on many occasions within my experience clairvoyants, psychometrists, spiritualists, and psychologists, and the like, have played their part, though it is not commonly known, in the unravelling of a more than usually baffling mystery.

Many famous murder trials of the past forty or fifty years have known assistance of occult science and the "inside story" of some of these will be told as I go along in these pages.

Evidence produced by these means cannot of course

be used by police—at present. As our experience of, and confidence in, super-normal phenomena increases, however, it is reasonably certain that such evidence will become admissible. Up till now it has served merely as a basis upon which to prosecute enquiries—and with astonishing results.

During my career in the police force and the C.I.D. I was brought constantly into contact with occurrences which can only be described as supernatural, and right throughout these pages a strong element of it constantly runs.

The story I am about to tell is not a case of crime detection by occult means, but I begin with it because it was my first intimate acquaintance with psychic matters.

The affair roused a great deal of public interest at the time, by reason of the high position in life held by the man concerned, and also the evidence given by me, then a young constable, at the subsequent inquest.

Information was given out by the Press—broadcasting was, of course, unknown at the time—that a certain gentleman, a financier well known in the City of London, had been missing from home for three days, suffering, it was feared, from loss of memory. A description was given and the public asked to help if by any chance such a person was encountered. I suppress the name to avoid the possibility of causing pain to the dead man's relatives, some of whom are no doubt living.

When the missing man had last been seen he was wearing a black, double-breasted overcoat of Chesterfield pattern, and a bowler hat: this was sworn to by one of his most intimate employees and confirmed by his wife, who stated that he was so dressed when he left home on the last morning he was seen alive.

The missing man's wife and daughter were students of occult matters, and when, after twenty-four hours, no word was forthcoming, they naturally became alarmed and went to a medium of their acquaintance famed for her psychometric powers, in the hope of gaining some information about the missing man.

Now, whatever one's views on spiritualism, the phenomena of psychometry are indisputable. Certain psychically sensitive individuals can, by holding an object which has been in intimate contact with the person about whom it is desired to enquire, perceive, not only the characteristics and past experiences of that person, but also the circumstances in which he is then placed. Further, I know of one well-known student who works without a medium.

In full view of all present not long ago I was at a meeting when he talked to a group of ladies and gentlemen. Addressing each individually as the "ethic controls" actuated or inspired him to frame his conversation.

A pair of gloves worn by the missing man were accordingly handed to the medium. She held them for a few moments, then placed them against her forehead. The two women sat motionless, expectant.

Suddenly a violent tremor shook the medium convulsively and she relapsed into a condition almost indistinguishable from trance. Presently she spoke, and her first words sent, so I was afterwards told, a shudder of horror through her awe-stricken listeners. "He is dead!" she said, in a tone rendered the more impressive by its detached monotony. "I see him . . . he is in a dark place . . . it is silent . . . there are a lot of trees. . . ."

Again the convulsive shudder, and she was silent for several minutes, her trance, or catalepsy, seeming to become deeper.

Then she began to talk again.

"He is wearing something white . . . the same colour as his face. There are flashes of lightning: the thunder is deafening. . . . It is awful. He seems to be standing in the air . . . ugh!"

She shivered violently as in an ague, and came slowly back to consciousness.

Now for my part in this affair. It was a strange, eerie experience, calculated to shake the nerves of the strongest man.

It was twenty-five years ago, and I—P.C. 664,

"V" Division—was working my beat in the area of Roehampton Lane, Putney. I was on night duty, in the course of which I had to traverse a narrow, dark and lonely passage between this place and Putney Park Lane.

The neighbourhood geographically has, of course, now changed considerably, but at that time it was as silent as a mortuary, and, save for an occasional domestic servant from one of the big mansions nearby, or a belated pair of lovers, was completely deserted.

Such beats were of course the least popular of any, and were usually given by older officers to young constables, with a vaguely defined purpose of "breaking them in."

The night was sultry and oppressive: the day had been scorching, and obviously a heavy storm was brewing. As we left the parade shed of the police station to take up our beats, the first vivid flashes of lightning lit up the sky to the south-west. By the time I reached my beat the tempest broke.

I have seen thunderstorms in many parts of the world, but the fury of that storm will always remain a vivid memory. Forked lightning clove the sky with jagged, wicked-looking flashes: thunder, deafening, crashing and awe-inspiring, maintained a continuous accompaniment and presently the heavens opened and there fell a torrential downpour of rain such as I have never since witnessed.

It was just about midnight: this storm was calculated to shake the nerve of the strongest man, and I am not ashamed to say I was scared. My immediate need was for human society, and I made for a spot where a fellow constable should pass, if he had not been held up by the fury of the storm. Fear lent wings to my feet that night, and my time for that few hundred yards did not disgrace my training in field athletic events.

I reached the spot and paused for breath a moment under the shelter of a tree. As I did so, a flash of lightning, dazzlingly illuminating, lit up my immediate surroundings. For a second I had a glimpse of

something which paralysed my every movement : my heart missed a beat, and a cold chill ran like an electric shock right through my body.

I had only been scared before : now I was dumb with horror.

Suddenly I heard my colleague's footsteps approaching, and his voice when he greeted me was a very welcome sound.

"What a night, chum ! I'm glad to see you."

I turned round, grasping him by the arm to stop myself from falling, as my knees had refused to function. I was incoherent, almost hysterical.

"Look ! Look !" I gasped. "Just up there. . . ."

I almost screamed the words, and my terror must have communicated itself to my colleague. He told me afterwards he had never been so scared in his life.

As I spoke there came another flash which lit up the scene as if by daylight. My chum saw now, and turned to me . . . men are betrayed by emergencies . . . for an infinitesimal split-second the blaze of our frightened eyes must have been revealed to each of us.

"Good God. Hanging up there on the tree. . . ."

Suspended on an overhanging branch of a stout oak tree was a figure which revolved slowly, regularly, monotonously. I did not need to see the white face, the glassy eyes, and the protruding tongue to know that it was past human aid.

My comrade recovered himself first.

"Pull yourself together," he urged. "We've got to get him down."

Regaining self-control with a tremendous effort, I climbed the tree and crawled out on the branch. With my pocket-knife I severed the rope which suspended this object, terrifying enough at any time, but doubly so in such eerie surroundings and on such a night as this. It was the body of a man who fell into my comrade's arms : a man of striking appearance, wearing evening dress.

The next day the body was identified as that of the missing City financier. It was learned that he had

been staying at a small hotel off the Strand, concealing his identity and seeing no one. His affairs had become "involved," to put it charitably : he had come within reach of the law, and this seemed to play on his mind to such an extent that he became deranged and decided to take his own life.

Apparently he had "one glorious hour" before the end, spending the evening among the flesh-pots of the West End, which accounted for the evening clothes, which he had bought specially for the occasion.

Thus was borne out in every detail the psychometric vision of the medium. . . . The "something white" which he was wearing was of course the white shirt front. There were trees on all sides, and he was "standing in the air." Was there ever a more remarkable piece of clairvoyance ?

CHAPTER III

Premonition ! The most recurring and striking phenomena known to human life. A startling public example of the year 1934. Cases recorded by well-known people of death warnings, disasters, etc. Where and when it happened in my own life. A crime discovered by such means in France, also a vivid true case by our own Scotland Yard.

SOME time back in last year my attention was instantly drawn to a placard of one of our great national evening papers. The notice ran : " Clairvoyant Mother Sees her Dying Child."

I suppose, with the rest of the public, I read of it with wonder on account of the strange revelations made at this particular coroner's inquest.

The mother, a Mrs. Sheppey, whose twenty-one-year-old daughter Anne was missing—saw in a vivid divination her child's body in a public cloakroom. She was so distraught and upset that she told Scotland Yard of her vision—but the police, according to subsequent statements, treated the mother's warning as ridiculous.

However, some time later, her missing daughter was found dead as the mother had told the police. She had committed suicide, her body being found in a ladies' waiting-room upon Woking railway station.

I make no comment upon this true strange happening, The British Press are responsible for its publicity. All I have done is to place it once again upon record in permanent form, as an instance of " psychic premonition " which is constantly happening all over the world to many, as warnings or visions of pending tragedy.

It has been publicly stated that the " etheric " voice of the late Captain Hinchcliffe came through during the trance of a well-known medium, urging her

to warn the authorities that there was a mechanical defect in the construction of our ill-fated airship R 101. So it was stated—the information was passed on to the authorities—but as usual—it was ignored. The world knows the tragic result of this giant liner's maiden trip to India, death and destruction, mechanical defects being the cause given for the reason at the subsequent official enquiry.

In a like manner, during the year 1911, by a psychic warning, a passenger on the ill-fated *Titanic* postponed his visit, but his two friends who ignored his warning, sailed. Again the world knows the result of this fatal maiden voyage.

During the summer of 1933 I was engaged in a great deal of big literary work. In fact, during this year from March to December I wrote three books, all of which have since been published and gone well.

To carry this out, I required quietness, and went to live on the South Coast for the season, choosing Patcham, just outside Brighton, for the purpose. During the beautiful spell of summer weather I used to make a habit of swimming, going to Hove for the purpose where I used to take my dip from the foreshore of that well-known bathing proprietor Professor Morley.

In the early part of the summer I, one day, ran into a very dear old Scotland Yard acquaintance of mine. An ex-Inspector of the Special Branch.

Now, this late colleague was a real good fellow. A man I always liked, and his death at a comparatively early age has left me the poorer in the loss of one who I always knew reciprocated my esteem for himself whilst he was alive. Beyond this I can say no more, except to account possibly one of the strangest cases of premonition it has been my lot to encounter.

When I met him quite accidentally, he was delighted to see me and to learn I was living in the locality. Further, it was our intention to meet again, but he knew I was busy, and in consideration for the amount of work I had upon hand, left our next meeting to some other time when the pressure I was working up to had been considerably reduced.

During our stay in each other's company, he came out with a strange remark :

" Ted, I shall not see the year out. My time has come."

" Nonsense," I laughingly replied, for his look belied all jest. " Why you're good enough for another half a century."

He shook his head.

" No, I've had it in my mind for a long time, I'm shortly going to die. You're the first I've told this to. I dreamt the other night I saw myself dead floating in water—and it's not the first time I've had the same kind of warning."

" Have you told this to your wife or anybody else besides me ? "

" No, you are the only one. For knowing you, Ted—I feel you would understand."

I made no reply. Nor did we refer to it any more, I dismissing it from my mind after leaving him as a " fit of the blues " Tommy was possibly feeling at the time.

Some two months later I went down, as was my custom, to have my daily swim at Hove. It was in the afternoon, and as I alighted from the bus, saw this particular colleague mentioned standing near the very spot where we had last met.

There was a large number of people about, but I made for the spot only to find that I must have been mistaken, for he was nowhere to be seen. I looked round for some time, thought it strange, but thinking my eyesight must have played me a trick, went on to the tents, disrobed, took my dip, came out and sat down on the shingle in the glorious sunshine of a hot July afternoon.

While doing so Professor Morley came along to me " Heard the news ? "

" No, what's the latest ? " I replied.

He handed me the *Evening News* and pointed with his finger to a leading column on the front page.

I went as cold as ice. There in startling announcement I read : " Tragic Death while Bathing of well-known ex-Scotland Yard Detective Inspector."

It was my one time old friend and colleague! He had died that *morning*. Not a quarter of a mile from where I now sat, while taking his customary swim along with friends from off the sea front at Hove.

I have no comment to make. But this much I know, that as sure as day follows night, I saw this particular ex-Inspector that afternoon, some eight hours after his tragic death by drowning.

This much also is certain, I was not thinking about him, nor was I aware that he was dead. Sometimes since it has occurred to me, it might have been a fallacy of perception. In view of all material considerations, let us assume this was the case. If so—why was it I made straight from the bus to the spot on the Promenade where I thought I saw him? Then to realize I was mistaken. Yet no more than a half-hour later to learn of his death that had happened not ten minutes' walk from where I heard the news. Again his strange foreboding of meeting his death by water. His warning being told to me—who learnt of it that same afternoon as I have said—not ten minutes' walk from where he was drowned.

In regard to police and crime detection, the following two instances of the supernatural are upon record that make deep thought for reflection to all who are interested.

During the war the French police, to whom at the time I was attached, traced and convicted a murderer through means of a strange dream which again can only be laid down to pure psychic premonition.

An old French shopkeeper had been robbed and murdered by some unknown killer in an out of the way café in the suburbs of Paris.

All attempts to trace the murderer failed, no weapon, clues, or signs of any possible identity to elucidate the crime being discovered.

Then his only son, home on leave from the Verdun front, called at Paris police-detective headquarters and told them of a strange vision he had seen in a dream, the night after the news had come to him in the trenches about his father's death.

He had seen quite clearly a tenement house in the Belleville district of Paris. Two of the shutters on the ground-floor were off their hinges and broken. There was also no door on the dark steps of this low-down kind of a house that served as a common passage-way to all its denizens. At the end of the passage was a small filthy yard full of refuse and debris accumulated in a large heap; underneath this heap—twice, he had seen—quite clearly—a revolver in a canvas holster.

At first this apparently fantastic account was accepted with credulity. But a detective was placed at his disposal, and both went forth into the Belleville district to see if, or not, there was such a building that would correspond in actual existence to what was thought an hallucination.

After two or three hours' search, both men came across a squalid-looking place with *both shutters broken and without a main door*. Further, some dark steps and a passage-way leading out to a courtyard containing a large heap of rotting domestic garbage.

On verification the police at once took action, more so when they found that one of the rooms, or dens, of this squalid apartment house, harboured a desperate criminal, long wanted for many crimes, including suspected murder with violence.

A team of detectives were set to watch the place before anything further was done and late that night the wanted criminal was jumped upon by several officers—and after a short fierce fight overcome, and taken away by his police captors.

Then followed the unpleasant task of searching the refuse heap. Everybody concerned by now, as a result of what had happened, were keyed up with intense interest to see what next would happen. Would the divination of the murdered man's soldier son work out to its final consummation? After about five minutes in silence one of the searchers bent down and took from his sieve an object—a *dirty canvas holster containing a revolver*. The soldier's fantastic source of information had indeed become a concrete reality. Every detail of his warning dream had proved to be

true ; those who witnessed it were silent in front of such undeniable phenomena.

The subsequent results that followed from the police securing this information are interesting.

The revolver and hoster were proved to be the criminal's property, a certain woman and man of the underworld testifying to this fact—as well as the actual man from whom he obtained it.

Further, on the night the old man was murdered he came back to the neighbourhood flush with drink and plenty of money, and bragging to some of the envious underworld denizens who were partaking of his unusual "liberality" of free drink that his "little friend" told no tales, flourishing a revolver in front of them all when he made the significant remark.

But what clinched the matter definitely as to his guilt was the discovery by the police, hidden away in his rooms, of a small woman's gold watch and chain.

This was identified by the son as that of his father. It belonged to his dead mother and since the night of his father's murder had been missing from a locked chest of drawers where it had reverently lain for many years.

Now this fact is only one of many that can be found in police departments if sought for, all over the civilized world, especially in America and on the continent. Dreams and premonitions bordering along supernatural lines coming to the aid of police, especially in cases of murder.

The annals of crime contain many cases in which a dream or vision has played an important part either as a warning that a crime was about to be committed or as a source of subsequent information which has led to the solution of the mystery.

A striking instance of a dream supplying information which led to the discovery of a crime, and the arrest of the criminal, occurred in connection with the mysterious disappearance of a man named Eric Gordon Toombe. Had there been no dream the police might never have been called upon to investigate the case and discover the true facts.

The late Francis Carlin, one of the "Big Four" at New Scotland Yard, had charge of the case, and started his investigations under a big handicap. Toombe, when the police took the matter in hand, had already been missing for more than a year; any clue which might have existed had grown cold, and the problem, on the face of it, seemed insoluble.

Toombe, in partnership with a man called Dyer, had been running Welcome Farm, Kenley, as a stud farm and training quarters for racehorses, and all Carlin had on which to start his investigations was, firstly, the fact that Toombe had disappeared, secondly, certain stories which came to his ears to the effect that the missing man had been impersonated and his signature forged on cheques, and thirdly, an account of a vivid dream which Toombe's mother had dreamed.

Mrs. Toombe had dreamed that she had seen the body of her son at the bottom of a well, and nothing could shake her belief that this was the true explanation of his disappearance and that he had been murdered.

It was on account of this dream that Carlin took action. He had, however, a "hunch" that it was a case of murder, and he began his investigations with a thorough examination of Welcome Farm.

It seemed unlikely that the place would yield any useful information. The house was in an advanced stage of dilapidation—it had been almost demolished by fire some two years before—the paths were overgrown with weeds, loose bricks and debris were scattered about the place, and long grass was growing all over the grounds. Any clue which might originally have existed had been effaced long ago.

Hidden in the long grass, however, the police discovered five cesspools which served to drain the place. Carlin remembered Mrs. Toombe's dream and gave his orders accordingly:

"Excavate the cesspools!"

It was a difficult task. Owing to long disuse there was an accumulation of bricks, concrete and other litter to be cleared away, and at a certain depth water flowed into the hole and had constantly to be baled out. By

nightfall, however, two cesspools had been cleared and their bottoms dragged, but nothing had been discovered.

By the light of hurricane lamps the perspiring officers set to work with picks and shovels on the third cesspool. They had not been long at work when one of them drew Carlin's attention to a curious fact: whereas in the other two cesspools there had only been small patches of bricks and cement here and there, this one showed signs of it all the way down.

Several huge pieces of concrete were raised, and for hours the officers were kept feverishly baling to gain on the inflow of water and to discover what was at the bottom. And then suddenly:

"Look at this, sir!"

Carlin went quickly forward and peered into the hole. Beneath the water, protruding from the debris, he saw a man's foot.

Eventually the body was brought to the surface. Certain properties of the water had kept it in a certain state of preservation, and Carlin needed no further confirmation of the fate that had overtaken Toombe.

On contact with the air, the body rapidly changed, but the murderer—sure, no doubt, that the body would never be found—had made a serious blunder. When he had thrust his victim into the well he had not removed the gold wrist-watch, tie-pin, and cuff-links, and by these Toombe's parents were able to identify the body as that of their son.

To remove all doubt as to Toombe having been murdered, the post-mortem examination revealed that he had been shot at close quarters with a shot-gun.

Carlin's hunch that it was a case of murder was thus proved to be correct, but without Mrs. Toombe's dream as a starting-point for his investigations, the problem of Toombe's fate might well have remained unsolved.

Carlin, however, had only begun his task. He had still to discover the murderer and effect his arrest, and for a long time he and the officers working with him laboured with dogged persistence, following up clues by the score. Gradually, as the information was

gleaned, the finger of circumstances pointed to one man as the murderer, and the hunt began.

The wanted man was traced to Scarborough, and Carlin went there to put the finishing touch to his months of patient labour by effecting his arrest. Fate, however, ordained otherwise.

It so happened that a man who went by the name of Fitzsimmons had aroused the suspicions of a local police officer, Detective-Inspector Abbot. Complaints had been received that he had been uttering false cheques in the Scarborough district, and as he was also the author of a suspicious advertisement in the local papers calling for men "with ability, highest credentials and sound integrity" to join in a get-rich-quick scheme, which entailed, it was found, the deposit of a sum of money as a guarantee, the local C.I.D. decided to investigate.

Inspector Abbot went one day to a certain bar which Fitzsimmons was known to frequent, for the purpose of interrogating him and making an arrest. Fitzsimmons was there, and the Inspector touched him on the shoulder.

"Just a moment, please, Mr. Fitzsimmons."

The man paled, but stepped aside with the Inspector without protest.

After a brief talk Fitzsimmons agreed to take the Inspector to his room and produce certain papers for his inspection. On the way, just as they reached the landing outside the door of the room, the officer, seeing Fitzsimmons' hand move towards his pocket, decided to take no risks, and sprang at him.

He was not an instant too soon. Fitzsimmons had grasped his revolver, and there followed a furious struggle for possession of it. Suddenly, as they grappled on the floor, the revolver went off underneath Fitzsimmons and he was killed on the spot.

Subsequent search of his room revealed that Fitzsimmons was undoubtedly Dyer, Toombe's former partner, and the game which he had been playing became clear. In his room were found nearly two hundred cheques pencilled with the dead man's signa-

ture, ready to be written over in ink, a suit-case marked E. T., and many other personal belongings of the murdered man.

The whole sordid story gradually came to light. There was no doubt that Dyer had induced Toombe to put up a large sum of money for the purchase of Welcome Farm. He had then set himself to find out the exact financial position of his partner. Having discovered this to a nicety, he planned to murder him, dispose of the body in the well, forge all necessary documents, and then launch out in some fresh place, impersonating the dead man.

His scheme met with a certain amount of success. For some months he impersonated his victim, drew on his banking account, and spent, mostly on dissipation, a sum in the neighbourhood of £3,300.

But for the dream of the dead man's mother, how long might not his nefarious career have continued ?

CHAPTER IV

The first Scotland Yard instance of the aid of clairvoyance to detect a series of awful crimes. A State secret revealed after fifty years supported by Press corroboration. Name of the medium and brief account of his remarkable powers or gifts. What he saw in his psychic or etheric shape—the terrible visions. "Jack the Ripper" traced through him—by police. Who he was—his dual personality—the dreadful facts revealed. The medical world of that period solve the problem and seal his fate. Modern occult students' views on distorted minds of murderers. Are they driven mad by etheric urge or evil spirits?

IN a black-japanned box, somewhere in the archives of the British Home Office, are the confidential papers concerning the identity of the most mysterious and spectacular murderer of the past hundred years.

Although "Jack the Ripper" did not perpetrate all the crimes which were attributed to him—his victims numbered five—they were all of so horrible and cold-blooded a nature (his victims, all of whom were prostitutes, being mutilated in the most shocking manner) that a wave of terror swept over the entire East End of London during the autumn of 1888, when they were being committed.

Speculation has always been rife as to "Jack the Ripper's" identity. He was never brought to justice, and it is commonly believed that the police were as ignorant as were the public as to who this prowling, maniacal butcher really was.

But, even in those early days, there were officers at Scotland Yard possessed of vision and imagination; and when, completely baffled and in despair (for Press and public were inveighing hysterically against the failure to lay the murderer by the heels), a well-known clairvoyant put certain information at their disposal, it was investigated, corroborated, and seized

upon as affording Scotland Yard a new avenue to their enquiries.

As will be seen, the supernormal powers of clairvoyance actually resulted in the tracking down of "Jack the Ripper."

The Ripper was a sadist of the worst type : he found a perverse pleasure in the infliction of pain and suffering upon women. He probably had a hatred of woman as such ; it is a well-known form of sexual perversion.

It is equally well known to psychopathic experts that such perverts have the cunning of madmen, and the extent of that cunning may be gauged when it is realized that on one occasion "Jack the Ripper" broke through a cordon of over 12,000 police drawn around the East End of London, slaked his blood lust upon the body of his chance-found victim, and made good his escape.

I am now about to make one of the strongest claims in regard to crime and the supernatural ever made in this country. In making this claim I have the support of one of the most powerful daily national newspapers of this country. My claim is that "Jack the Ripper" was tracked by a clairvoyant, and that his identity was actually known to the authorities.

The name of this remarkable clairvoyant was Robert James Lees, who dictated a document and left instructions that its contents should not be revealed until after his death. The present living relatives of this psychic student, who live in the Midlands, told the special correspondent who saw them, that a pledge of secrecy was put on him after his discovery of "Jack the Ripper's" identity.

This clairvoyant enjoyed Royal patronage, and was received more than once both at Balmoral and Buckingham Palace by the late Queen Victoria. For his wonderful public work in tracing and arresting the "Ripper" he, until the day of his death, received a pension from the Privy Purse. Nearly fifty years ago, unknown to the general public, a court of about a dozen well-known medical men of the highest integrity and standing, held an enquiry concerning the alleged insanity of

"Jack the Ripper." It was definitely proved that he was a physician of high standing who lived in a select part of the West End. When the multiple murderer's actual identity was proved, and his homicidal mania definitely established, all parties were sworn to secrecy : that is to say, the doctors, police, and the "psychic detective" who had unravelled the mystery.

It transpired that the murderer was an ardent vivisectionist ; the sight of pain, instead of softening him, had the opposite effect. This grew on him and he took the fiercest delight in inflicting tortures on all kinds of dumb and defenceless animals. By the time he reached man's estate his secret practices were tantamount to barbarity.

About this time he met the lady who became his unfortunate wife, and it was not long before she discovered that he had a mania for inflicting pain. When she gave evidence before the committee she told of many insane and cruel things that she had seen him do to dumb creatures. It appeared that he was subject to sudden and unconquerable moods, and his wife had, of course, every chance of observing their nature.

When these moods came on him, some trivial act would warn her of his condition. He would violently kick the cat in the stomach, or put his hand in the goldfish globe and squeeze one of the fish to a pulp ; or perhaps whisk a fly off the table and impale it on a pin ; or the leg of a dog would be pulled out of joint, and the paw of a cat put in the fire. His eyes and expression at the same time were twisted into an unutterably cruel grin and fixed stare. He became totally forgetful of the passage of time and of everything around him except the pain and contortions of his helpless victims.

One day his little boy, aged about four, imitated his father in one of these momentary moods of cruelty ; the father gave the child a terrible thrashing. As the boy screamed and gasped in pain the madman's ferocious mania asserted itself and, had the wife and maid not thrown themselves between him and the helpless child, he would have beaten the boy to insensi-

bility and death. As it was he made a running kick at the child as the frail little body lay practically senseless. The blow was mercifully intercepted by the mother who threw herself at the man and came down with him. The maid in the momentary break cleared off with the child in her arms to the sanctuary of its nursery.

By a strange contradiction he was in his normal moods the most refined and gentle of men. He was kind and courteous to all with whom he came in contact.

Such then, according to testimony, was the nature of the "Ripper" in private life. His was the sort of character which must have prompted Robert Louis Stevenson to write *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

The circumstances which led to the detection of this inhuman monster, are extraordinary and altogether unparalleled in the whole history of crime. It was certainly Robert James Lees who put the London police on the track of "Jack the Ripper." I may take the following quotation from a published account of his life :

"In his early years Mr. Lees developed an extraordinary clairvoyant power, which enabled him to discern as with the eyes of a seer things hidden from comprehension of ordinary men born without this singular gift.

"At the age of nineteen he was summoned before the Queen, where he gave evidence of his powers as a clairvoyant which excited her utmost astonishment.

"When the first crimes of the 'Ripper' gripped the public attention, this particular clairvoyant was sitting writing in his study.

"Suddenly a strange and unconquerable urge or feeling came over him, and in a sort of trance or vision he saw the following scene rise before him.

"He seemed to see two persons, a man and a woman walking down the length of a mean street. In his 'ethereal existence' or spirit shape, which to him had left his physical body, he followed them and saw them enter into a kind of court. Going along they passed

a public-house ; it was still open for trade and by the light of a big clock, he could see that the hands stood at 12.30, the time at this period, public-houses closed.

"Going along together, the woman appeared to be drunk as she bumped into the man from time to time, who by his walk was perfectly sober.

"Presently they turned into a dark place with an open door. He read the name, it was *George Yard Buildings*.

"They leant against the wall, the man was dressed in a light suit of Scotch tweed, wore a dark, large, black felt hat pulled down well over the eyes, and on his arm he carried a dark-coloured light-weight overcoat or mackintosh.

"By the dim rays of the street gas lamp, his eyes on one or two infinitesimal reflections, glittered ominously. The man suddenly put his hand over the woman's mouth, drew a knife from his pocket and cut her throat.

"The blood streamed over his clothes and dress front. The man kept his hand over the victim's mouth until she sank to the ground. Then he stooped down and in a scientific manner commenced to make several mutilations on the prostrate body of the unfortunate woman.

"Having done this, he calmly proceeded to wipe the blood off the knife on to the skirt of his murdered and mutilated victim, and picking up the light coat he had dropped, just prior to his attack on the defenceless woman, he slipped it on, buttoning the garment up to the collar so as to hide any traces of blood and, placing his hands under the victim's shoulders, dragged her into the darkness of the open doorway."

The vision of Mr. Lees then ended.

This took place in the early hours of the day following August Bank Holiday in the year 1888, and was found to be the very first victim of the "Ripper," named Martha Turner, whose body was discovered, with the throat cut and shockingly mutilated, in the dark doorway of a common lodging-house in *George Yard Buildings*, Commercial Street, Spitalfields.

Mr. Lees was so horrified at the terrible dream or

trance that he had seen with his occult eyes, that there and then he went and told the whole thing to Scotland Yard.

His story was accepted with incredulity, but the officer on duty made a note of the time and the place and there the matter was allowed to end.

This information was given to the police late on the night of August Bank Holiday. It will be noted that no crime had been reported to the police from the East End, and besides, it was the first one of the "Ripper's" victims.

It was only after the inquest of the victim was held, and a woman friend of the dead Martha Turner said she saw her at about 12.20 a.m. walking in the company of a "toff" who wore a light suit and carried a coat on his arm, that the wonderful and exact forecast of the medium was taken notice of. Even then the police did not take the trouble to get into touch with Mr. Lees.

This gentleman when he learnt of the terrible murder next day was so shocked and upset—that his whole nervous system was deranged—and for many nights he could not sleep, so thoroughly was he affected. His physician, who was in attendance, seeing the dangerous state of his patient, ordered him abroad, and with his family, Mr. Lees went to stay for a time on the Continent.

During his sojourn abroad he recovered, but by this time the Ripper had added two more victims to his grim list. Mary Ann Nicholls was murdered and mutilated in circumstances of great brutality in Bucks Row, Whitechapel, on August 31st of the same year—1888—and Anne Chapman was killed and mutilated in the same dreadful manner at 29 Hanbury Street, Whitechapel, on the morning of Saturday, September 8th. Jack the Ripper had definitely become a monster and a mystery.

During his visit abroad Mr. Lees was no longer troubled by strange visions, but shortly after the third crime Mr. Lees returned to London, and while riding in an omnibus from Shepherd's Bush in company with

his wife he experienced a renewal of the strange sensations which had preceded his former clairvoyant condition. At the top of Notting Hill a man entered the vehicle, and almost as he did so the clairvoyant felt the singular numb, powerless sensation which had overtaken him previously. As he looked across at the far corner where the man had dropped into a seat, he felt icy cold as his gaze met, for one brief second, the eyes of the fresh passenger.

The man was wearing a Scotch tweed suit and light overcoat with a dark felt hat whose brim came well down over the eyes. The bus jogged and rumbled along until it came to Lancaster Gate, while Mr. Lees was subject to every "unknown" feeling ever experienced by mortal man.

Leaning over to his wife, he said: "That man in the opposite corner is Jack the Ripper!"

Mrs. Lees smiled and in an undertone replied "Don't be idiotic!"

"I am not . . . I know it . . . I feel it!"

At the Marble Arch the sinister gentleman alighted.

Leaving his wife with a hasty word that he would follow her home later, the medium also got out and shadowed the man, who by now had fallen into a smart walk and was crossing Hyde Park. At Hyde Park Corner, Mr. Lees was following immediately behind him and the medium saw a policeman standing just outside the gates.

The Ripper now turned in the direction of Piccadilly and hailed a hansom cab just outside Apsley House.

"Constable!" called Mr. Lees, "you see that man getting into the cab he has beckoned—well, he's Jack the Ripper—I want you to arrest him."

The constable did not quickly say as a smart officer would have done: "You say it is the Ripper: well, it's your risk but I'll arrest him, and the onus is on you to prefer the charge." Instead he laughed at the medium and, in fact, told him to "move on" or he would run him in.

The clairvoyant was very upset at this turn of events.

Still, in the light of subsequent events, it may all have been for the best.

Presently Mr. Lees found a sergeant, and to him he reported the incident. The sergeant was obviously a man of different mental calibre from the constable, and there and then wanted to know the number of the particular officer.

"Every member of the police force has been warned," he told Mr. Lees, "that *any* information from the public concerning the murderer is to be taken up immediately. I'll have him on the report for this!"

"In the official communications this morning," he went on, "there was an anonymous card to the effect that the Ripper would be in the West End between one and two o'clock—and, by God, it's one fifteen now!"

"But only the police know this, sir."

The sergeant must have been surprised to hear the facts from a member of the public, and he made a note of the incident.

That night Mr. Lees again received premonitions that the Ripper was about to commit another murder. The scene of the crime was not so distinct as in the first vision, but the face of his victim—a woman—was clearly shown. Immediately the medium went off to police headquarters, and asked to see the detective in charge of the investigations. . . .

The clairvoyant's visions continued, and his revelations to the police were of a character so striking and convincing that it was ultimately decided to ask him for such help as he alone could give in tracking this human monster to his lair.

Accompanied by the inspector in charge of the case and a body of police officers, the "sensitive" visited the scene of the Ripper's last murder, and any student of the occult will realise the mental agony he endured as the terrible atrocity was re-enacted before his clairvoyant vision.

Presently he rose, and, his eyes staring into vacancy, moved off rapidly in a westerly direction: he had picked up the psychic trail.

Followed by the officials, he walked mile after mile, never once hesitating, until he reached a street in the West End of London. Here, outside a big, imposing-looking house, he stopped, reeled and would have fallen but for the support of the inspector.

"In there!" he gasped. "The murderer!"

The inspector's heart sank. So the night's work, the results of which had been so confidently anticipated, had been wasted after all, and they were as far as ever from the trial of the Terror. For this house before which stood the little group—the medium in obvious distress, his breath coming in short, laboured gasps—was the residence of a very famous London physician.

After a while, however, the clairvoyant, when he had recovered, was so persistent in his claim, and moreover gave the inspector such startling corroboration by describing accurately the interior of the house, that it was decided to take a chance.

Lengthy questioning of the doctor's wife brought to light the most amazing Jekyll and Hyde story ever heard. This man, one of London's most distinguished doctors, had a dual personality. Normally he was just what I have purported him to be—a capable physician, his life and talents dedicated to the alleviation of suffering. Abnormally—and of these occasions he had no recollection—he was the insane, sadistic monster who had terrorized Whitechapel and sent a thrill of horror throughout Europe.

For some reason which I have never been able to discover, the ordinary processes of the law were not resorted to, and no disclosures were made to the Press or the public. As the doctor moved in very high and influential circles, it is possible that this had some connection with the amazing manner in which the police authorities proceeded to deal with the case.

The doctor, after being certified insane, was placed in a private asylum. To account for his disappearance from society it was announced that he had died suddenly from heart failure, and funeral rites were actually conducted.

In a London cemetery reposes an empty coffin, said to contain the remains of the famous West End physician whose death at an early age was mourned by London and the medical world.

This story has in substance already been told. I have no actual proof of its truth, but during my years at the Yard it was more than once recounted to me as I have related it, and I have not the smallest doubt that it is true, and that psychic science was, even forty-five years ago, enabled to step in where police work had lamentably failed, and lead to the detection and incarceration of one of the world's worst criminal lunatics.

CHAPTER V

A twentieth century repetition of the "Ripper." Peter Keurtin, Terror of Düsseldorf! The same methods. Four years a secret menace to female life. Again the dual personality. A loving husband. Some reasons for his "state of mind." The German police when "The Terror" was still at large fell back on clairvoyance. An account of the awful consultation experienced by their medium. The subsequent arrest and trial of Keurtin—the revolting inhuman details of his killings revealed. Was he the very same demented type known as the vampire? All deductions of alienists, psychic students and police authorities seem, on this point, unanimous. *Dracula*, by the late Bram Stoker. This work although strictly non-committal in the form of a collection of diary entries, was based on fact. There are vampires. The occult know them as "etheric shapes" or evil spirits that enter the bodies of the living.

THE past generation and the present have produced two outstanding series of crimes which present an interesting problem for the investigation of both occultists and criminologists. It is of all the more interest in that, although the sinister activities of these two criminal maniacs are separated by nearly fifty years, their methods were practically identical, although one of them was a skilful, polished surgeon and the other an ex-convict of the lowest mental calibre.

I refer to "Jack the Ripper" and his modern prototype, Peter Keurtin, the "Terror of Düsseldorf." The "Ripper" case I have already dealt with, and have shown how, despite popular belief and official denials, the mass murderer was traced by occult powers and incarcerated in an asylum from which he was never released. Peter Keurtin died on the guillotine, but in common with most criminologists, as well as alienists, I believe that Keurtin was not actually responsible for his terrible crimes.

Peter Keurtin's reign of terror lasted for nearly four years, during which time the entire resources of the

efficient German police were in action against him. His victims have in many cases been identified, and Keurtin has confessed his guilt, but it is a moot point whether many unknown victims did not fall before the razor-edged knife of the terrible vampire. He was finally captured through the instrumentality of his wife, who regarded it as her duty to sacrifice him to the police. Sacrifice is the correct term, for, despite his crimes, Keurtin was a loving husband, and his wife had no knowledge of his crimes until in a fit of terrible depression he confessed to her. But for that, he might still be at large to-day.

I must ask the reader to bear this latter point in mind, for it is my intention to prove that Keurtin was possessed of occult powers which enabled him to foresee, while in a state of trance, the possible movements of his trackers. Without such second-sight, or whatever we care to term it, I believe it would have been impossible for the murderer to have avoided for so long the intense activities of the German police.

The Keurtin case was the first occasion on which the German police called in occult aid. This fact was, of course, not made public, but I have managed to garner the details of a remarkable séance that was held in Düsseldorf within a few hours of the finding of Keurtin's third victim. By this time the police were convinced that the murders were the work of the same man, and were ready to take any steps, no matter how macabre they seemed, to trace the fiend who had thrown the city into such a state of terror.

With the greatest secrecy, detectives visited a famous German medium, a woman whom I propose to call Frau Grondin, because I am not at liberty to reveal her real name. I have already indicated that the spirit world as we know it to-day is opposed to vengeance, whether legal or otherwise, and Frau Grondin told the officers that this was her opinion. Nevertheless they begged her to use all her powers in an effort to secure some clue, however slight, that might put them on the butcher's track. Their most impressive argument was, of course, the fact that

unless speedily apprehended the murderer would add other victims to his grim toll. At last the medium consented, and a rendezvous was made for an immediate séance.

The séance was held in a darkened cellar, illuminated only by a single red globe which burned dimly above the classical features and snow-white hair of the medium. Only half a dozen men were in the room, and they all stood well back from the arm-chair in which the woman was seated. Two detectives mounted guard at the foot of the cellar steps, while others were in the garden outside. Every precaution was taken against the possibility of an interruption at the critical moment.

For some minutes there was a death-like silence, the intensity of which, coupled with the vault-like atmosphere of the cellar, frayed the nerves of the waiting men. Then their hair almost stood on end as they watched the handsome face of the old lady transform slowly into a visage of dreadful evil. The kindly mouth was drawn back into a bestial snarl; eyes burned like living coals, and the slim white hands of the woman clutched frantically at the arms of the chair.

The lips moved, saliva dripped from the corners of the mouth, and weird and awful sounds filled the room. It was not the gentle old lady speaking; it was the spirit voice of some horrible creature who in his earthly days had butchered and tortured like a maniac. No sane creature could have mouthed the awful oaths and blasphemies which came from between the snarling lips.

Even the steel-nerved detectives were shaken as they listened to those strange mutterings. Then the senior officer pulled himself together, and asked in steady tones:

"We want to know who is killing our people here in Düsseldorf. We shall not harm him. Will you tell us?"

"No! No! Let him kill them—it is good. I like blood—blood—blood!" shrieked the awful voice,

while the medium's tongue licked her twisting lips at the mention of the word, squirming in her chair like some fearful vampire.

"But you know him, don't you?" persisted the detective.

"Of course I know him. I control him. He does what I command. When I want blood he drinks it for me," the maniacal tones shrilled. "But you shall not find him. You shall not take him from me."

Suddenly the medium sprang to her feet, and leapt like a tigress upon the detective. He fell back as hands like steel claws gripped his shoulders. But in spite of his violent struggles he could not escape the grip of the frail woman and it took three of his comrades to drag her away. When she recovered she could describe nothing of what had happened, save that she knew herself instinctively to be in the grip of an evil spirit, and endowed with his colossal strength. And colossal it must have been when it took four strong men, used to rough-and-tumble fighting, to shake off those claw-like hands.

But the strange séance had achieved nothing, unless the suggestion that the murderer was under occult influence could be accounted for anything. Later, I believe, other attempts were made to communicate with the spirit world in an endeavour to contact other spirits who might give some information. I believe that the only result was a confirmation of the details already learned. The butcher was in the grip of a spirit of evil; but, opposed as they were to vengeance, the other spirits would give no information—at least, that was what the mediums claimed.

It is my intention in these chapters merely to state facts as I know them. Do not think that I am a spiritualist; I am not, but I am a man of my times with an open mind. All I seek to do is to gain knowledge of a subject as enthralling as it is mysterious, and to endeavour to state the facts as they relate to the strange problem of the occult and crime. But it is certainly my opinion that the Düsseldorf murderer was not a free agent; that whether it was his sub-

conscious mind that was evil, or some mysterious spirit from another region had possession of him, he was helpless when he slew. The voice speaking through the medium had said that Keurtin drank blood for its benefit. And that is exactly what Keurtin did. Time and again he sucked the bleeding wounds of his victims, taking a fiendish, inhuman delight in his horrible acts.

I shall now deal extensively with Keurtin's story at the trial, and endeavour to prove that all his actions were those of a man under some strange and terrible influence; but whether natural or supernatural, I shall leave the reader to decide.

After all, the terrible film of *Dracula* based upon the novel of the late Bram Stoker, a renowned criminologist and student of the occult, gave the first insight of this kind of supernatural to an astonished public. His book was not based upon a vivid imagination as is generally thought—but rather more—a brilliant pioneer mind, revealing in fiction for the first time on record facts that were known and are still in existence about phenomena connected with crime and the supernatural. Also, of which I refer to more fully in a later chapter.

The facts of the arrest of Peter Keurtin are already known. A very brief interval elapsed between his capture and his arraignment, in accordance with German law, on the many charges of murder, attempted murder and assault, to which he had pleaded guilty. This interval was occupied in taking a complete and detailed confession of Keurtin's crimes, which formed the sole evidence against him.

Because of the world-wide interest in the case, it was decided to hear the charges in a spacious hall of the police barracks at Düsseldorf. This venue was also desirable on account of mob feeling, which was naturally running very high. Fortunately the Germans are a people amenable to law. Had Keurtin been arrested in America, let us say, he would most certainly have been lynched by a furious mob.

Psychologists, spiritualists, biologists and criminolo-



(Above) Peter Keurtin, Germany's "Jack the Ripper."
(Below) Troops patrolling outlying area during his reign of terror.

gists from every part of the world hastened to Düsseldorf for the trial. No doubt many of the audience were awaiting the appearance of some ape-like monster, when two policemen appeared in the dock and stood aside to allow the prisoner to pass up the steps and take his place before the court. Instead they found a well-built man, slightly below middle age, with heavy, not unhandsome, features, and calm, steady eyes. He looked like some stolid, respectable artisan, a trifle puzzled by the magnificence of the court and the obvious importance of the audience.

The reading of the charges occupied some time, but during the whole period that the voice of the accuser droned on Keurtin stared ahead of him with an expression of mild wonder. Asked to plead, he rose and gave a short reply. He had pleaded guilty to the most atrocious series of crimes in modern history. Keurtin then commenced a recital of his crimes, the entire transcript of which is before me as I write. It is so terrible that I have only read it spasmodically. I cannot bring myself to continue for hours in an atmosphere of sheer physical horror.

So, apparently, thought the judges who tried Peter Keurtin. Several times during his cold-blooded story the presiding Judge stopped him. Those in court felt physically sick as he recounted his appalling tales of blood and slaughter.

From this terrible narrative I have selected several points which I shall use in an endeavour to explain my reasons for believing that Peter Keurtin acted under occult influences. The first of these is that Keurtin had spent long periods in German prisons, where his sufferings had, he claimed, unhinged his mind.

Now German prisons are not nice places, but they are conducted on those regular lines typical of the Prussian discipline. Keurtin, or any other man of his mentality, would have suffered little physical violence, but the terrible monotony might easily have served to render his mind receptive to evil influences. That is the theory accepted by many scientists and criminologists throughout the world.

It is possible, with the most elementary knowledge of the psychological, to follow the workings of Keurtin's mind. Constantly brooding, he became obsessed with the belief that society in general was responsible for his torment. Keurtin was existing in an atmosphere of evil, surrounded by criminals of the lowest type ; and surely if we believe in evil spirits we will agree that, should they seek evil company on earth, they will find it in prison ?

However, I will finish with the Keurtin case by giving the opinion of a distinguished London neurologist.

This gentleman is a well-known Professor who has achieved great success as a hypnotist. The Professor works on the sub-conscious mind, which is literally the spirit within the living body, and it is his belief that the sub-conscious mind, continuing to function after death, forms what we regard as the disembodied spirit.

The Professor contends that by influencing the sub-conscious mind he is able to bend the patient to his will, and this is the method he has adopted for the successful cure of drug and drink addicts, sexual perverts and persons with homicidal and suicidal tendencies. I doubt whether there is a greater authority on occult matters than he, and certainly he has effected more cures by hypnosis than any other man in Europe.

Some time ago the Professor became interested in the case of a well-known London man of considerable wealth whom it had been found necessary to confine in an asylum because of his pronounced homicidal tendencies. On a number of occasions this man had become so violent that he was possessed of the strength of four men, and had expressed the most fiendish desires to torture and kill. These fits were all the more remarkable because normally the victim was a charming, even-tempered man beloved of his family and his associates.

It was arranged that the Professor should visit him in the mental home where he was confined, and the briefest examination convinced the neurologist of the fact that this man was perfectly sane for eleven hours

out of twelve. This meant that he spent his sane time in the company of lunatics of every kind, and the moral effect is better imagined than described. The neurologist examined him very closely and learned that during his violent fits he was subject to definitely occult influences ; in short, he was possessed of spirits utterly foreign to his nature. He was absolutely under their control during his obsessions, and when they had subsided he had no memory of what he had done. Such a man, of course, if at large, might well become a " Ripper," and would be protected by that animal-like cunning which distinguishes such criminals.

I have asked the Professor whether it was probable that the Düsseldorf murderer was possessed by occult influences when he committed his crimes. The neurologist informed me that this was more than likely and that, as Keurtin murdered during what amounted to a state of trance, only his sub-conscious mind would be operating. The exceptional keenness and sensitivity of the sub-conscious gave him such an eye for detail that he was easily able to cover up even his most minute traces.

CHAPTER VI

Another case that might have made a fine young man a murderer. Possibly one as bad as "The Ripper" or "The German Terror" just mentioned. The common phrase so often heard in cases of sudden killing: "He was not himself." My first experience in the police of such an instance. What I know of the same thing from the secretary of a London spiritualist group. The story of a well-known peer—and his "potential murderer" nephew. The sea voyage, what the peer saw on deck—and afterwards in his wife's saloon. His shocking discovery. His determination to cure his nephew. How he acted when back in London. The visit with his nephew to a clairvoyant. The séance. An awful experience—terrible manifestations upon the part of the medium and his nephew. What the witnesses saw and heard. The sequel and its good results.

PERHAPS, like so many of us, you are sceptical when you read of some unhappy murderer piteously exclaiming from the dock that he knew not why he killed. I have myself seen this spectacle many times, and I have always felt a sudden, inexpressible urge of pity for the poor devil, no matter how awful his crime. Even in my youngest detective days, I remember that I was impressed by such scenes. Perhaps the man is truthful, I would think; and there were many hardened old detectives who agreed with me.

"There's something in what he says, lad," a veteran inspector told me one winter's evening as we left a police station where we had just charged a wild-eyed young man with the attempted murder of his wife.

"But they could all say that," I protested.

He smiled. "Yes, but I can tell when a man is speaking the truth. I am ready to swear that that man was not himself when he attacked his wife."

"Was not himself"—what is the literal meaning

behind that common phrase? May we take it that many murderers are a separate entity at the time they commit their crimes? There are things which man can never hope to understand—at least, not at present—and though we may start by being sceptics, many of us end by keeping an *open mind*. Apropos of which, I was particularly interested in the astonishing story unfolded to me—years after the event I am about to describe—by the secretary of a famous London spiritualist group. There can be no question of this gentleman's sincerity, and of his knowledge, but obviously the nature of this story compels me to alter the names of the individuals concerned.

Lord Pretlow visited the secretary of the society to which I have alluded one summer's morning. He was in a great state of agitation, and it was some time before he was sufficiently collected to tell his astounding story. Briefly the facts were as follows:

For many years the young nephew of Lord Pretlow had lived with his wife and himself, who were both passionately fond of the boy. In return he was devoted to them, particularly to Lady Pretlow, whom he regarded as a second mother. The Honourable John Bentley developed into a charming young man, he had no outward vices, and was popular in the social circles in which he mixed. Some months before, however, a sudden and inexplicable change came over him, and he was subject to fits of violent depression. Hoping to cure the lad, the Pretlows took a long Mediterranean cruise, but this appeared to make the lad worse instead of better. He used to spend long evenings alone on the boat deck, and one night when Pretlow went to look for him he found his nephew clinging to the rail and struggling violently.

"You're trying to throw me overboard," he screamed. "I won't go—I won't die."

Lord Pretlow seized him by the arm, and at his touch the young man became normal again. He burst out weeping, and his words sounded terrible in Lord Pretlow's ears.

"Oh, uncle, uncle," he moaned, "I can't help it.

It's driving me mad—it's with me always—it wants to kill me."

"Come, come, my boy," his uncle reassured him. "What are you talking about? There's nobody here."

"I know—I know," moaned the lad. "It's something I can't see; you can't see. But it's here, it's with me always. I am accursed."

Lord Pretlow summoned the ship's doctor, who announced there was nothing organically wrong with the young man and expressed the opinion that he must be suffering from some kind of obsession. Perhaps at the end of the journey he would be all right again. The next few days seemed to bear out this hope, for young Bentley became his usual cheerful self, mingled freely with his fellow-passengers and appeared to be enjoying the trip enormously.

Then one night Lady Pretlow retired early with a slight headache. Her husband watched the dancers for a while, and then adjourned to the smoke-room for a convivial game of bridge with some of his cronies. The rubber finished sooner than they had expected, and after a final whisky and soda the players decided to retire. Lord Pretlow entered his cabin quietly, and did not turn on the light for fear of disturbing his wife. A sudden, unaccountable feeling seized him. His brow became clammy—there was someone else in the room with his wife. Lord Pretlow's hand groped noiselessly for the switch, and as the light flooded the room he fell back with a cry of horror.

Standing erect above his sleeping aunt was John Bentley. His features were distorted by a demoniacal leer, and in his upraised hand was a long knife. For seconds there was a dead silence; uncle and nephew stared into each other's eyes. Then abruptly the nephew choked, dropped the knife, and staggered past Lord Pretlow on to the deck. Recovering from his stupor, his Lordship rushed out and seized the young man.

"Good God!" he gasped. "What would you have done? You would have murdered her!"

The agony in the young man's eyes told Lord Pretlow that greater powers than we can understand were at work within his nephew's soul. The man he had seen standing by his wife's bed was not the handsome, broken youth who stood supplicatingly before him. Lord Pretlow was an imaginative man; he laid a hand on his nephew's shoulder.

"You were not yourself," he said simply. "We will talk about it in the morning."

Next day the ship docked at a Mediterranean port, and Lord Pretlow announced his intention of returning to London immediately with his nephew. A short conversation with the lad that day had convinced him that such fits were likely to recur, and that no earthly power could release the young man from the demon of evil which at such times possessed him. Lady Pretlow was naturally surprised, and a little indignant. Her husband told her nothing of the events of the previous night, but impressed on her the fact that it was on behalf of her beloved nephew that he was leaving her.

On the overland trip, Lord Pretlow watched his nephew like a hawk. At night he locked him in his sleeping compartment, and did not relax his vigilance until they were safely installed in their London home. Then he went post-haste to the offices of the association, where he laid before the secretary his astounding story. The official was not greatly surprised.

"We have had many such cases," he told Lord Pretlow, "and in most of them we have effected cures. Your nephew is the victim of a fairly common phenomenon, unfortunately, though only rarely does it take such a malignant turn. We must consult a medium as soon as possible. I shall send for one now."

"What do you intend to do?" enquired Lord Pretlow.

"To exorcise the evil spirit which possesses your nephew," answered the secretary. "Unless we can do so, he must be sent to an asylum."

"But he is the sanest man in the world—except when he has these fits," expostulated his Lordship.

"Precisely," the secretary agreed. "You must remember that there are scores of similar cases. Many a murderer has been hanged because the jury could not accept his story of insanity. I warn you, sir, that you will be taking on a very serious responsibility if you fail to detain this boy—provided, of course, that we cannot cure him."

John Bentley was sent for, and the medium, a frail young woman, looked at him intently. She asked him to describe the fits which seized him. He told her that they would come over him at the most unexpected times. The night his uncle had found him gripping the ship's rail, he had suddenly felt that someone had him by the waist and was trying to throw him overboard. He had resisted with every ounce of his will, but it had been a very close thing.

The medium looked at him queerly. "John Bentley," she said sternly, "you are in the grip of an evil spirit. But you have brought it on yourself."

"What—what do you mean?" gasped the young man.

"When did you see Lecoin last?" she questioned.

John Bentley sat bolt upright in his chair.

"My God!" he screamed. "How did you know of that?"

Briefly she told him that she had psychic knowledge which told her of his doings in Paris, when he had gone to the low haunt of the man Lecoin and indulged in all kinds of perversion. He hung his head as she spoke. It was at Lecoin's, she told him, that the spirit of evil had seized him for his own. The earthly doings of young Bentley afforded the spirit a savage satisfaction. He had induced him to attempt to murder the aunt he loved. Had he done so, the spirit would have derived fiendish glee from the spectacle of his remorse and punishment.

Then commenced a terrible séance. Many sceptics will read these lines and smile cynically, but there are others who will try to understand. They will doubtless understand and sympathize with the anguish of those two people—the uncle and his beloved nephew, the

former seeing nothing but an insane asylum for his loved one if the medium should fail. We may sneer at psychic manifestations, but who shall say that the weird séance was not justified, if only as an attempt to rid a decent young man of an obsession that threatened to end in misery, ruin, even the gallows?

The medium sat in a padded chair, with two strong men on either side. Presently she commenced to struggle violently, and it needed all the efforts of the men to hold her down. Then from her lips came horrible blasphemies in a man's voice. All those in the room shuddered at the fearful curses and awful oaths which came from her pure lips. It was the evil spirit talking through her. He swore that he would not release the young man, that he would cling to him, force him to unutterable things. Bentley should commit the foul crimes which the spirit had himself committed whilst on earth. He would never release him—never—never!

The curses died away. Those in the room wiped the perspiration from their brows. Lord Pretlow and his nephew were in a state verging on collapse. Young Bentley huddled forward in his chair, appalled at the manifestation of the thing which possessed him. Suddenly he raised his hands to heaven and called on God to release him. It was an awe-inspiring moment.

Then, as the prayers ceased, the calm, clear tones of the secretary rang out. He appealed to the spirit, begged him for the sake of his own soul to release young Bentley. The spirit replied with more horrible blasphemy. But the clairvoyant stuck to his purpose. He was still appealing when the medium suddenly sagged in her chair; the séance was at an end. Very shaken the participants withdrew.

From that day young Bentley has had no further obsessions. He leads the life of a healthy, normal young man, and is now happily married. Whether or no you believe this story, I know at least that the facts are true. Of course, young Bentley may have exorcised

himself by his own beliefs in the spirit world, but the unalterable fact remains that the trance was held, that the voice was heard, and that a potential murderer was saved from a fearful fate by powers of which we mortals of the present generation know little.

CHAPTER VII

The murder of Bessie Hollister in the U.S.A. Another type of crime upon the same lines as "The Ripper." Richard Ivens arrested. His arrest and emphatic denial. The strange plea of Ivens. Found guilty. His ominous remark to the State executioner just prior to his death. Dr. Wickland, famous American student of the occult. His wife and a visit from Richard Ivens. His pathetic message and appeal. Another terrible séance. A voice comes through the ether again—"The Butcher's"—a confession of forty-one years of slaughter made clear. What the "etheric voice" as uttered from the living human throat of the Doctor's medium told him. His account to the police. Many unknown crimes cleared up. Vindication of Richard Ivens' innocence.

CHICAGO in all its lurid history has known few more ghastly crimes than the murder of Bessie Hollister, a prepossessing young woman, who was the last person one would have thought to be in danger of a murderer's sadistic fury. This fact made the task of the authorities all the more difficult when one morning in July, 1906, her mutilated body was found in a vacant allotment on the outskirts of the city. I shall spare the reader the details of this fearful crime, and content myself by saying that not even the "Ripper" murders could equal in sheer ferocity the murder of Bessie Hollister. As usual the police looked for some person who might have had some motive for the awful crime. They drew a blank. Bessie Hollister had had no love affairs, and, in any case, was scarcely the type of young woman to rouse any normal man's passions to the appalling extent revealed by her wounds. It is possible that the police might eventually have been compelled to shelve the crime, but furious public opinion spurred them on, and, in addition to the local police, special investigators from every part of the United States were rushed to Chicago to aid in the solution of this baffling crime.

Quite suddenly fate took a hand, and threw a young

man named Richard Ivens into the hands of the authorities. He was arrested and lodged in police headquarters for questioning. Ivens appeared completely dazed by the charges laid against him, and for many hours, during which he was submitted to the worst rigours of the third degree, he maintained that he knew nothing of the murder, that he did not know the girl, and that his mind was a complete blank at the time the murder was committed.

Such a defence to-day would have led to the consultation of eminent psychologists, but in those days it was merely the signal for more "hose" (as the brutal American beatings are called) and served only to convince the police that they had the right man.

After several days, Ivens was formally charged, and after the delays usual in American criminal procedure faced a judge and jury for the murder of Bessie Hollister.

With fierce invective the District Attorney laid the facts before the jury. There could be no shadow of doubt that the mild-mannered Richard Ivens was the murderer of Bessie Hollister. He would call four reliable witnesses who would testify to having seen Ivens in the vicinity of the allotment where the body was found within a few minutes of the crime. They would produce a knife, which witnesses would identify as Ivens', and with which the crime was unquestionably committed.

Could the jury, the prosecutor continued, doubt for one moment that Ivens was guilty in the face of such evidence? And in defence what had the accused man to say? He could only repeat his assertion that, at the time when the unfortunate girl was being brutally hacked to death, her remains subjected to mutilation of the most fearful kind, he had no knowledge of what he was doing. In short, Richard Ivens could lay no defence before the court; could call not one single person who could prove his whereabouts at the time of the crime.

"You may believe the accused to be insane," he concluded. "But you cannot—on his own admissions

in this court—find him guiltless of the murder of Bessie Hollister.”

The defence replied, of course, but the able counsel who argued for the prisoner's life must have realized the hopelessness of his task. It was soon over. The brief summing-up left the jury to judge on the evidence, and on that they had to find Richard Ivens guilty. Half dazed, the young man heard the death sentence, and in a state of semi-collapse he was hurried from the court-room.

All legal formalities completed, Richard Ivens was led from the condemned cell to the gallows in Cook County Gaol some weeks afterwards. His arms were pinioned in his cell, and those who saw him remarked on the clear, fearless expression on his handsome face. Here was the face of a man who saw in death only a happy release from earthly suffering, and who was ready to face his Maker with a pure heart. With firm steps he mounted the dreadful structure in the prison yard; the noose was adjusted, and a hard-faced Deputy-Sheriff asked him if he had anything to say.

Clearly the condemned man's voice rang out :

“I am not guilty. Some day I shall return to earth, and you shall know who killed Bessie Hollister. Good-bye, and may God bring my spirit back to tell you the truth.”

The executioner moved his arm, the trap-door opened. Ivens disappeared through the gap, the law had taken his life. A little while later, a deputy steadied the swaying rope, and the prison doctor certified Ivens as dead. Would his last words be borne out by future facts? Could his tortured spirit return to earth?

Now for the sequel! Between the years 1865-70 the police of America had to contend with the activities of as evil a gang of murderers as ever “ornamented” the pages of criminal history.

The fact that the murders are so old, and that the police never succeeded in definitely connecting many of the crimes with the gang, known as the “White Caps,” makes it difficult for me to gather complete

data concerning the murders. I have, however, a vivid recollection of a conversation with an old officer with whom I did beat duty soon after I joined the Metropolitan Police. He remembered the "White Cap" murders, and had also heard of a terrible creature known as "The Butcher," who was reputed to be the head of the gang.

However, in America some of the worst crimes in all the annals of murder were committed. Owing to the lack of co-ordination at the time between the many police forces in that country, the "White Caps" committed murder after murder, without the crimes being associated with their sinister activities. In every case the victims were women, and horrible mutilation marked the remains. Finally "The Butcher" died from the effects of a prolonged whisky "jag," but before the end came he confessed to a priest, who afterwards deemed it his duty to make the facts known to the police. They were not published, however, although as a result of the information the gang was broken up, and several of its members sent to the scaffold.

Richard Ivens, as I have already related, died in 1906. Many months after his death, Mrs. Wickland, wife of the well-known American psychist, found herself in the grip of a spirit who was soon identified by her famous husband as Richard Ivens. Very carefully Dr. Wickland listened to the distraught voice which issued from his wife's lips, and as he listened the full horror of Ivens' death dawned upon him. The conversation was conducted on lines somewhat as follows:

THE VOICE: "I am Richard Ivens. When I died I told them that I would come back. Oh, listen to me; listen to me. They made me do it. I didn't know. Oh, I swear I did not know."

DR. WICKLAND: "I believe you. Now, tell me who made you kill Bessie Hollister?"

THE VOICE: "The big men—the big men. I couldn't help it. Shall I tell you?"

DR. WICKLAND: "Yes, you are amongst friends."



Two forms of death sentence in the United States of America.
(Above) The Scaffold. (Below) The Electric Chair.

You have nothing to fear ; the big men cannot harm you now."

Mrs. Wickland then commenced to struggle very violently, and fell from her chair to the floor. Her husband, knowing her condition, made no attempt to interfere with her ; although, of course, he took care to see that she derived no physical injury from contact with any objects in the room during her struggles.

"I can't ; I can't ; they have me now, they are fighting me," the voice shrieked, its accents of terror affecting even the experienced psychist. Gently he addressed the spirit.

"Please, please," he adjured. "Do not let them frighten you. They can no longer harm you."

The struggles ceased, and then, as though breathless with exertion, the voice continued :

"They are always with me. I could not escape them on earth. Believe me, I did not know I killed Bessie Hollister. I had no hatred against anyone. Then the big men came to me at night. They would not let me alone. I thought at first that I was becoming insane, and went to a specialist" (a fact that the trial elicited), "but they kept at me. Night and day they were with me, they walked with me on the street and stood beside my bed at night. I could not escape them.

"When I left home one morning, they made me take a knife with me. Before that I never carried a knife, but they made me do it that day. One of the big men said he would kill me if I didn't. I worked all day, and was going home at night when they seized me by the arms and led me to the outskirts of the city. They made me sit behind a big fence and when the young woman came along they attacked her. They took my knife from me and cut her up. She cried once or twice, but they took no notice. Then they went away, and left me with her."

Hardly were the last words out of her mouth than Mrs. Wickland commenced to struggle once again. This time it appeared as though she were striking out at a number of men who were attacking her, and it

was several minutes before she sank exhausted to the carpet. Faintly words came from her lips.

"They won't let me tell you; they won't let me tell you. They're taking me away."

Dr. Wickland, in his amazing book *Thirty Years Amongst the Dead*, says that unquestionably Ivens was in the *grip of evil spirits* when he murdered Bessie Hollister, and that on that ground he was not guilty of murder. Bear in mind that here is no amateur spiritualist—or, for that matter, a spiritualist of any degree—but one of the greatest neurologists in America, possibly in the world. Dr. Wickland's work amongst mental cases must earn him everlasting honour, and if such a man believes firmly in spirit communication and in the presence of evil spirits in the human body, who are we to deny him?

But I have not yet dealt with the conclusive proof of Ivens' innocence—conclusive, that is, to those prepared to accept the defence of supernatural influence. Some nights after the final visit of Richard Ivens, Mrs. Wickland found herself with a strange spirit.

At first it was thought that Ivens had returned, but the voice which issued from the medium was a very deep, coarse one which contrasted with Ivens' anxious, yet somewhat refined tones. The medium struggled violently, and the coarse words which came from between her lips gave Dr. Wickland an idea.

"Do you know Richard Ivens?" he asked.

At once the answer came, eager and hoarse.

"Of course, I know him well. I am the biggest of the big men. He is afraid of me. I have come to tell you that I killed Bessie Hollister, he didn't."

Dr. Wickland was propitiatory. There was something in the boastful voice that convinced him that the man was anxious to talk about his crime.

"I have wanted to meet you," he said gently "You have committed many murders, haven't you?"

"Yes," came the boastful reply. "I was the biggest murderer on earth. Up here I cannot kill anybody, but me and mine get others to do it for us.

We had wonderful times on earth. We have killed hundreds of people."

"Who are you?" asked the doctor.

"The Butcher," came the reply. "Haven't you heard of me? Why, everyone in the world has heard of me."

Dr. Wickland induced the spirit to continue, and listened to a terrible recital of hideous crimes. He made a careful note of each murder, taking care to get as many details as possible. Months later he verified the majority of them, and in some cases connected "The Butcher's" story with the case of some unidentified victim, whose murderer was never suspected. It should be borne in mind that Dr. Wickland had no knowledge of these crimes, and that he went to work only on the information he received through the mediumship of his wife. However, let us return to the case of Richard Ivens.

Wickland questioned "The Butcher" closely as to the murder of Bessie Hollister, and elucidated the fact that the girl had resembled one of "The Butcher's" lifetime victims, and that he felt a violent urge to kill her. He communed with the spirits of some of his choice companions and they decided to fasten themselves on to the unfortunate young man. An interesting point in connection with the whole affair is that the mutilation of Bessie Hollister was practically identical with that on many of "The Butcher's" victims.

CHAPTER VIII

Murder in high political circles. The assassination of Sir Curzon Whyllie, Secretary of State for India. What Scotland Yard knew in fact—the principal detective in Special Branch who knew most. What he knew—and what he informed the authorities. His talk with the Indian Secretary's potential murderer. What was threatened. The warnings ignored. McLaughlin's three vivid warnings. Were they just fantastic dreams? Or pure psychic warnings. The night of the reception at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington. Sudden death and murder. Two fine lives lost to the State—murdered by Lal Dringha, an Indian student and political fanatic. The Special Branch detective's psychical knowledge of facts—and his psychic divinations about the tragedy—borne out by true happenings in every detail.

A STRANGE case of "psychic premonition" was that revealed to me during the life of another old Special Branch colleague—the late Inspector D. McLaughlan. His name will always be coupled with Lord Kitchener's, for he died on duty at his side during the Great War when the *Hampshire* went down in the Atlantic.

In my next chapter I shall deal with this tragic incident and of the strange forebodings "Mac" had about the sudden end of his life. However, in order to explain clearly I must commence from the start, for then it will be understood what it is I wish to convey about the everyday supernatural phase known as "psychic premonition."

When I joined the Special "Political" Branch he was my superior and tutor in what was then officially known as the Indian Seditious Movement. At that time in Paris, and especially in London, a certain class and type of educated Indian was causing the authorities a great deal of anxiety. Not so much for their "actions" but for "actions" they constantly threatened at secret assemblies to put into effect.

In the main most of these seditionists had been in England for a number of years, had become Westernized in habits, used to our customs, and, to their benefit, educated by this country in all they knew.

However, the doctrines of revolution began to spread among some of these students as far back as 1900. Any act or deed of violence in India by fanatics was hailed by these seditionists in London with open expressions of appreciation and satisfaction.

They convened meetings all over London, but avoided public opinion by holding them in private at their own places of residence. At these meetings of "British denunciation" they always tried to obtain fresh converts. These new converts being, if possible, young inexperienced Indian students fresh from overseas, who were in this country to study.

It was just *this practice* which worried the Government, the spreading and dissemination of revolutionary propaganda by these "hot-heads" and "gas-bags" to innocent young Hindoos. A poignant but dangerous fact which, try as they would to prevent, had its culmination during the summer of the year 1909.

Among some of these Indians was one by the name of Lal Dringha, a morose, excitable student of impressionable temperament, the type whose mind soon becomes unbalanced. More so if *played upon* by schemers, as was the case in this instance, for from a mild, studious, scholarly learner he slowly evolved into a keen revolutionary convert, from this phase to "dangerous fanatic"—and finally to a political assassin.

There was one man who slowly watched this alteration. With grim tenacity he kept on the heels of Dringha, checking and verifying his fiery speeches, his vows, his movements and actions at all times possible.

This man was McLaughlan. He had been deputed specially to keep an eye on Dringha, and in this delicate task as an officer of Special "Political" Branch, Scotland Yard, he loyally carried out his duty.

No officer was more persistent than McLaughlan in

making known to the authorities his views and conclusions about Lal Dringha, not only by personal, but in written reports upon many occasions.

In this view it is possible he was "psychic," for on three occasions he maintained that in a dream he had seen Dringha vividly. On the first warning, with a revolver in his hand near a big block of buildings which he, McLaughlan, could not make out, but in the following warnings or premonitions the place seemed to be more familiar. Of this much he was certain—they were not government buildings. However, in the third warning, so vivid was his premonition that he saw Dringha raise his arm and fire an automatic. He aimed at some particular person among a crowd of people, but where the scene of this happening took place and who it was Lal Dringha fired at, he could never make out.

Now, all this happened during the early months of 1909. Then in early June of that year he learnt that Dringha was in possession of a large automatic pistol, but try as he would he could not confirm this fact.

One day he openly challenged Dringha of carrying firearms on the offchance of bluffing him into an admission, but the fanatic calmly asked him to make a search, not only of his person, but also of his room. McLaughlan took him at his word, but found no weapon.

It is the opinion of many that the weapon was held in readiness for him by one of the other many agitators, nor at the time did this fact escape Special Branch notice, extra vigilance and watch being kept to try and trace such a possibility among other suspected seditionists. In regard to his three warnings, McLaughlan mentioned the fact to several people, but it was not reported officially, naturally, as matters of this kind are not tolerated, besides he would only have been laughed at for quoting such a "hare-brained idea."

Some two weeks prior to what I am going to relate, McLaughlan met Dringha face to face in the Tube station at Notting Hill Gate. He accused the Indian

of violent speeches and threats, for it had come to his knowledge only the day previous that at a certain meeting Dringha had openly avowed his intention of murder by direct action—against one of the “British tyrants” in official power.

He sternly warned Dringha of the dangerous policy he was adopting, the only reply forthcoming from the suspect being one of violent denunciation against everything British—and McLaughlan included.

I do know that if it had rested with McLaughlan and others, Lal Dringha would, after this incident, have been rounded up and detained, for it was apparent he was a fanatic of dangerous propensities; furthermore, he had all the indications, by speech and action, that his mind had become unhinged. The agitators behind the scenes had worked well on this temperamental student—they had driven him insane!

But officialdom is officialdom! especially when between various departments. The men on the spot—the Special Branch of the “Yard”—knew what might be expected, but the Home Office and India Office did not share their perturbation.

Lal Dringha, student and half-mad, fanatical Indian seditionist, was allowed to proceed about at large, not that he gave any outward sign of his intent, but to those who knew, it was felt that burning inside this man were fierce fires of controlled passion. He was the type! A type that once incensed with an obsession—in his case political hatred—could, if he thought himself a martyr, sacrifice all for his cause and become a killer! So this turned out in very truth. Some little time later a large assembly of distinguished people was gathered in the Imperial Institute, Brompton Road. Among those present were His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, Sir Curzon Whyllie, many famous Indian and Anglo-Indian people, including Dr. Laccala and others.

In the middle of the proceedings an Indian student detached himself from many others present, walked up to Sir Curzon Whyllie, pointed an automatic pistol and fired point blank. Trying to intervene, Doctor Laccala was also fired at, both distinguished men falling dead

to Lal Dringha's seven rounds of bullets belched from his automatic in front of the horrified assembly.

I know this grim tragedy affected McLaughlan profoundly. To the very last he swore that the three premonitions he had of this murder were the most remarkable things ever known to happen to one man.

What was stranger is the fact that no police protection was afforded on the night of this grim drama. McLaughlan knew of the meeting and had made up his mind, on his own account, to be there, but that same day was ordered to take on another duty. At six in the evening he was free. Then and there he decided to go off to the Imperial Institute—as he felt “some urge” that something was going to happen. In fact, all that afternoon he *could not dismiss Lal Dringha from his mind*. He was about to go off to the Institute when a superior detained him in the Hall of the “Yard” and took him away on another job the other end of London.

McLaughlan told him of his “forebodings.” So much so that they rang up Special Branch with the object of ordering the reserve detective on night duty to go there immediately as a precautionary measure, although no official orders had been given in the duty book for any officer to attend. He, also, had been sent off on another mission, so the duty was not carried out.

McLaughlan, in the absence of this possibility, suggested ringing the local police station for them to send an officer to the Institute, but the Inspector would not listen to this precaution as practicable, as he said it was Special “Political” Branch work, and the officer would not know Lal Dringha—and besides, it might cause complications. His official mind could not understand the agony of poor “Mac’s” undoubtedly psychic premonition of impending tragedy. At ten that night, upon return to headquarters, both officers learnt of the cruel, cold-blooded murder.

They looked at each other in silence—so “Mac” told me years later, each man, from that night onwards,

never referring to the incident again, but "Mac" further told me—and I place it upon record :

"I walked away from 'the Yard' that night like a man in a trance. It all seemed so clear! So vivid to me—yes, somehow, I knew something terrible was about to happen."

To the day of his death "Mac" always bitterly reproached himself for not following his intuitive "psychic premonition" in regard to the murderer of the late Sir Curzon Whyllie and Doctor Laccala. "Had I acted unofficially," he pensively concluded, "I might—who knows—have saved the lives of two innocent men!"

In conclusion, I might mention the curious case of the late Inspector Sweeny, of Special Branch, during the stormy days of 1883 when the Fenian dynamiters were playing havoc with their bombs all over London. At this time, for the Branch, it was a case of very stirring times. He used to tell of a "constant feeling" about Old Scotland Yard (then detective headquarters) being blown up.

The feeling came over him often. He could not dismiss it from his mind.

One day, at work at his desk, an "unaccountable feeling"—more like an "urge"—made him leave the building and go out into the street to look round.

All was quiet. Nobody was loitering about the vicinity. Nor did anything strike him as out of the ordinary or at all suspicious.

Yes, try as he would to suppress the feeling, he still felt the sense of some impending danger.

He was about to return to his desk and resume work in the lengthy correspondence he was dealing with that he knew would take him some hours to complete, when an "impulse" made him think of something he had to do elsewhere. It was quite unimportant as compared to his present reports and could wait.

But the sudden "urge" made him alter his decision and go off to Victoria.

Upon his return about an hour later, he found the front of Old Scotland Yard (*vide* picture) blown out by

a Fenian bomb causing over one thousand pounds' worth of damage.

The explosion had occurred right near the site of his office, smashing the contents of the room to smithereens. Had he been inside—as he would have been but for the “warning”—he would have been blown to atoms.

CHAPTER IX

Five years roll on from the date of last crime. The actor in this last tragedy and myself meet on Active Service. Our pleasure at seeing each other. Inspector D. McLaughlin, Special Branch, New Scotland Yard, now the personal detective or bodyguard to Lord Kitchener. Myself, fresh from the trenches, now attached as sergeant to Intelligence Secret Service, G.H.Q., St. Omar. What McLaughlin told me. Our last good-bye. What he told another colleague in England at Euston, morning he left with Kitchener on the ill-fated trip to Russia. Same premonition of impending disaster in every detail. I do not know of this fact until ten years later. Dan's death in the icy waters of the Atlantic on the *Hampshire* at the side of Lord Kitchener.

BEFORE I came again into direct contact with the subject of my previous chapter five years slipped past. But what a lot of things had happened. The Great War was on and Fate somewhat changed our roles, for from the peace-time one of Special Branch detectives, both were now members of the British Secret Service.

McLaughlan, however, had more of a personal duty than I, for he was attached to Lord Kitchener as his guarding detective or protecting bodyguard, whereas my duties, although just as responsible from a general point of view, were those of a purely military nature, concerned with enemy spy activities against our Armies in France.

It seems the irony of Fate that McLaughlan should have been destined for this duty, for, unlike me, he was not a soldier, yet he died in this role and had the "psychic premonition" that he would do so in the strange way I am about to relate.

In early 1915, having served with my regiment from Mons to the first Battle of Ypres, I was taken away and transferred to Intelligence at General Army Headquarters, St. Omer, prior to being dispatched

back to the forward front-line area on all-round "contra-espionage" duties.

Whilst there, Lord Kitchener came out from England on an urgent military mission. As a result I met McLaughlan, in the uniform of an officer attached to the great war-time soldier's staff.

It was a meeting of short duration as that same evening Kitchener left by a special train for Bolougne, there to be met by a torpedo-boat waiting to dash him from France to England, then again from Dover by special train to London for a midnight Conference with the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Downing Street.

Just before the train left St. Omer I stood chatting to McLaughlan at the rear-end of Kitchener's Pullman. I can picture the dark, dimly-lit station as I write these lines even after a lapse of over twenty years. Inside Kitchener's compartment, the great soldier himself, the late Lord French, Earl Haig, Marshal Joffre and Foch, as well as other highly-placed Staff Officers of the French and British Armies. Some seated at the table, others standing—but all in deep conversation. While on the platform, in several small groups, waiting for the train's departure, several more Allied officers, French railway officials and a sprinkling of gendarmes, military police, a few odd soldiers—McLaughlan and myself.

As he stood there I thought what a fine-looking man he appeared, as without doubt he was singularly masculine-looking and handsome, a fact which I must place upon record as it impressed me so much at the time.

Generally, as I recall him, "Mac" was cheery and bright, but upon this occasion he was silent and preoccupied, as though he had something on his mind of deep consideration.

I laughingly commented on the fact, reminding him of the "soft" job he'd got being attached to Kitchener.

"You don't know what I do or you'd never 'chip' me about the job."

Immediately I realized he was in a strange mood

and made haste to try and rectify my clumsy attempt at joking, but he did not give me an opportunity.

"Ah!" he went on without enthusiasm. "It isn't what you think it is." He paused, looked towards Kitchener's carriage and added, "I know they are after the Field-Marshal. I hardly dare sleep for thinking they will get him one of these days."

It was not, of course, that he was afraid. Fear did not enter into the make-up of my dear old handsome Irish colleague's calculation. No, but it was the ever-recurring idea of something beyond his control—something mysterious—and with his natural Irish temperament the sense of responsibility weighed him down.

I know he had a premonition of coming tragedy. At any rate, this I know, that as my ill-fated colleague shook my hand in farewell prior to the departure of the Commander-in-Chief's special car from St. Omer station in 1915, he said these ominous words: "Good-bye, boy. God bless you—I SHALL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN——" not "I *may* never see you again." He was definite.

Before I could reply all the great soldiers mentioned were leaving the train. "Mac" pressed my outstretched hand with both his and jumped on to the corridor steps. Then the whistle blew and the train was on the move.

It was my last farewell to Detective Inspector McLaughlan, Special "Political" Branch, New Scotland Yard, personal attending detective attached to our Secret Service on duty with the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army.

Time passed on, and there came that fated farewell moment when Kitchener left King's Cross for Scapa with his personnel attached to which was McLaughlan.

Used as the world was at that time to a succession of shocks and horrors, few events in the war staggered the nation as did the awful event which followed.

On June 5th, 1916, while on the way to Russia in H.M.S. *Hampshire*, the ship struck a mine off the Orkney Islands. She sank in a few minutes. Nearly

eight hundred officers and men and Lord Kitchener and his entire staff were drowned.

There were only eleven survivors.

Now for the strange sequel inasmuch as it concerns "psychic premonition." I have it from another living witness, a present serving member of New Scotland Yard who was present when McLaughlan left for his last tour of duty on this earth, that he turned to him and said :

"I feel it somehow. I SHALL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN."

Now why should McLaughlan have said to this man—eighteen months afterwards—precisely the same words as he said to me ?

Did he have a "psychic premonition ?" Who knows. Personally I am certain he had.

Regarding the psychic the Great War revealed many strange things. I know!—for a few were encountered by myself, therefore I feel certain there are thousands of other men who, if they could, or would, tell, must have had similar experiences. Now, after about twenty years of silence, with psychic premonition becoming ever stronger in its proof, claims about such matters are constantly being read in all sections of the responsible Press.

Why is it ? Change of opinion ? Modern views—or just sheer interest ? Or again an intuitive sense that the great mass of the people will not refuse to ignore or dismiss something which it is felt no human mind—or set of human minds—can properly explain.

On this score I can pass no opinion. It's beyond me ! Except to state that I know there is a great change of view by all sections of the community in regard to the psychic, as well as towards the religion, faith or science that is in sympathy with it, commonly known as spiritualism. What can be said of this strange war story ? One of many vouched for by a lady in Camberwell who was herself a nurse.

It has the same aspect in its true, grim account as that of *The Corsican Brothers* written by the immortal Dumas over three-quarters of a century ago, dealing with

twin brothers who, although hundreds of miles apart, always felt each other's emotions. Then one was killed in a duel—and at the moment of death the brother in Sicily felt the shock, was knocked unconscious, and on his body, when he came to, was a large, blood-red bruise. He knew his brother was dead, the second he was killed and how he died. This account, taken from the Great War, reads the same :

“ During the war a soldier was brought into our dressing-station mortally wounded, although at first we thought we could save him by amputation.

“ He kept calling for his twin brother, who served with him. We sent a stretcher-bearer to get in touch with the brother, and found that he had been killed outright.

“ We told our patient, however, that his brother was coming to see him, but he weakly replied : ‘ No, he'll never come ; he's gone. And I can feel the great pain he was in when he died.’

“ We asked him where he felt the pain, and he said : ‘ My head, my poor head.’ His own wounds were all in the legs and stomach, yet he felt no pain there. He tossed about and kept holding his head and saying : ‘ My poor head, my poor head.’

“ It so upset me that I made enquiries about his brother, and found that the left side of his face had been blown away. Now for the queerest part : *when our patient died the whole of the left side of his face was stained a bright crimson.* It was so queer that the doctors working within distance came to see the body.

“ The boys' parents are now living in South-East London.”

This is one remarkable instance of premonition. In regard to “ haunting ” or cryptesthesia, I quote another war story before relating in my next chapter one of my own experiences.

Of this account a gentleman in South Lambeth Road is the author, and both stories were signed and published.

" In 1919, whilst engaged on exhumation work, I was stationed near Pozières, on the Somme, and my sleeping quarters were in a shallow dug-out which ran underneath the remains of a road crossing the main Albert-Bapaume road, close to where the Australian Memorial now stands.

" On my second night there I was awakened by the unmistakable rattle and jingle which every ex-soldier would recognize as that of a ' wagon G.S.,' and it seemed as though the wagon was proceeding at a trot along the old road outside the dug-out. I was not the only man who heard it, for, as I rose on my elbow to listen, a tense voice from the darkness said : ' There it goes again.'

" I asked the speaker, a sergeant of an Irish regiment, what the noise was. Another voice answered me and said : ' It's the " dead wagon " from Contalmaison ; it comes every so often, but none of us has ever seen it.'

" I passed it off, thinking the noise was due to our transport en route from one camp to another ; but, on further thought, I realized this could not be so. For one thing, there were no night movements in operation at that time, and, secondly, neither horse nor motor transport could have used the road, for it was pitted with deep shell-holes and impassable a short way from the camp.

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" After hearing the sound on several nights I decided to investigate. One night I heard the ' jingle ' approaching from the direction of Contalmaison ; I rushed out, and, although it was a clear night, I could see no sign of any wagon, but I could distinctly hear the ' sound ' disappearing in the direction of Courcellette. What was it ?

" A day or two afterwards I was exploring the shell-scarred ground in the vicinity in company with a sergeant of the Australians who had been in the area in the attack of 1916, and we came across a derelict German G.S. wagon, with the skeletons of

two horses, lying in a badly-shattered part of the old road previously mentioned.

"The Australian had an experience to relate about this. It appeared that, in the 1916 battle, a German G.S. wagon *did* collect dead from the Contalmaison district at night and, it was believed, carted the bodies to Courcellette. One night a British shell caught the wagon and beheaded the two soldiers on the box-seat and killed the horses. The wagon was the very one we were looking at, and the Australian went on to describe how he had later assisted to bury the headless men—and the contents of the wagon. This, he said, was the 'Dead Wagon' that we heard pass along over our heads at dead of night !

"I am not in the least superstitious and do not believe in the occult, but I certainly *did* hear the wagon on several occasions, and it is also certain that no wagon could possibly have traversed the road at that time."

CHAPTER X

Cryptesthesia—or “Haunting.” The scene of a war-time mystery. Commencement among the troops of a strange weird rumour. The prevalency of the rumour causes G.H.Q. Intelligence to take action. As a sergeant of our Intelligence, or secret service, I am ordered to investigate. My first night in the cellar of a shell-shattered haunted village. The strange sound at midnight. What the sentry and I distinctly heard and what I saw. Another colleague takes over—what he heard, saw and three men fired at with their revolvers. His account to me of the “horror from the grave.” Action of French and British military authorities. How it was put into effect—the results and tragic discovery. Cold-blooded murder! What we found. The story of how it all came about. Can a curse uttered in life cause an “etheric shape” to haunt the scene of a crime? Possible explanation. The views on such phenomena of Sir Oliver Lodge.

DURING the War a most peculiar case in connection with the “unknown” came under my notice. It was so eerie that for a time it dominated my thoughts to the exclusion of all other duties. Nor was the experience a secret, inasmuch that nearly every officer and man in this particular sector of the line knew something or another about this particular dump in question being lonely and haunted.

The place where this true incident happened was at the time in the area well behind the British lines between Laventie and Houplines. But since the time of this phenomenon it has disappeared, wiped out in the terrible fighting that took place all round this locality, when Ludendorff broke through on his last terrific bid in what is now far-off 1918 days.

In the archives of our War Office somewhere in old Intelligence reports there is a record of this true supernatural happening; but it has been withheld from public knowledge mainly on account of its almost impossible explanation. Also, I expect, because of few people in full possession of the facts being unable to reveal the story to the light of possible judgment.

Yet the story was known to many soldiers, and since the War I have met several comrades who actually bore out this account—with the exception of a few vital facts—detail for detail—so I am not alone in the exclusive knowledge.

Here are the facts as I know them and as I know of them from various living witnesses, who, if I were challenged, would no doubt come forward to substantiate the authenticity of this remarkable story.

In late 1916 there was commenced behind the lines in different parts of our far-flung trench front, series of places or sites that held reserve dumps of explosives, such as bombs, hand grenades, etc. These spots were generally demolished farms or houses in some uninhabited or evacuated village as far as conveniently possible from attraction of hostile searching artillery.

The idea of these improvized small arsenals was, of course, a quick reserve supply in case of emergency, and to safeguard the possibility of any danger, such as sabotage by some prowling enemy agent behind our lines, a soldier from whatever regiment so detailed was sent there for a week on special detachment duty to guard over the stock of explosives.

From a soldier's point of view—except for extreme loneliness—the duty was “cushy”—easy is the more understandable word. A week's rations were taken along to the place by transport, with fuel and candles, and then the soldier was left to his own devices until his week's tour of duty was over.

The scene of the strange phenomenon had once been a small village. It was desolate and lonely, devoid of any kind of human habitation, every cottage, house or farm being long deserted and reduced to ruins by excessive artillery concentration.

However, enemy artillery observation had long since ceased to play on it, as the place was a shambles of brickwork and debris, hardly likely to conceal billeted troops and too near the line for any concealed gun-pits. It was for this reason the ammunition was placed there in a basement of what had once been a large farm, our military authorities taking the million to one chance

of a stray direct shell ever finding such a valuable target—and sending a soldier there each week on special outpost duty to prevent interference from prying eyes, which, if such a thing should happen, would be through the medium of some venturesome enemy agent behind our lines.

I know the place and can vouch for its loneliness, a shambles of brick heaps and a cobbled street running through it.

In the cellar, where the ammunition was stacked in boxes, the men who came and went on the duty of guarding it had made themselves comfortable. There was a bed fixed up by our engineers, a good stock of blankets, cooking utensils, a large supply of old books, newspapers, magazines, a large coke brazier—or coal, an unlimited supply of candles and plenty of rations.

An easy but lonely job. Night time was the worst, and the only thing for the sentry to do was to read or go to sleep. I do not remember how long it had been going on before I heard of this strange incident, but stories soon began to circulate that the dump was haunted. But these accounts only seemed to come from soldiers whose week of sentry had been carried out with the moon in full.

One man swore to hearing heavy footsteps on the cobbled road. Another to hearing and seeing some shadowy form moving about in the ruins. Then the last rumour, stronger than the others—that the sentry had actually seen a man digging, had challenged, and getting no reply fired point-blank, but to his amazement the spot he had fired at was—void.

So strong did these rumours become that the duty became a very disagreeable one for the troops to undertake. They openly expressed their aversion. Dealing with the enemy was another matter, at least, they did know what to expect from his quarter—but for one man on his own in a haunted village—it was asking too much for human flesh and blood to endure.

It was then thought that perhaps some enemy agent was at work trying to work up some scare, thinking that

perhaps by doing so a chance could be got to slip into the cellar and blow the place to smithereens.

On the face of it such a thing seemed too unfeasible, for had this been the case, why not steal in, take a chance, surprise the sentry and then put the plan into effect. However, in war no chances can be taken when in doubt, so it fell to my lot to take a watch with the next sentry by orders of our Intelligence, and see if I could discover if or not there was any truth in these persistent rumours about the place being haunted.

I chose for my tour of duty on this new task to turn up at ten o'clock each night, a password being arranged with the sentry and myself when he heard me arriving in the lonely shambles. Further, I was supplemented by a French gendarme, in case of arrest being necessary of any civilian who might be in the plot.

Our first night on duty passed pleasantly enough, the soldier was only too glad of our company and by the light of several candles, added to which was the warmth from a good fire, we played cards and talked until well after midnight.

I then went up the cellar steps that led out to what had once been the street to get some fresh air and have a final look round before turning in for the night.

It was a cold crisp night, a new moon was well advanced and all around was fairly clear visibility. Only the darkness and shadows of the ruined village alone seemed impenetrable and foreboding to one's gaze.

Except for some distant rumbling of guns or intermittent crack! crack! of musketry—dead silence. Nor was anything else to be seen except "picked out" for miles and miles, as far as the eyes could travel, the constant ascent of Very Lights into the far-off darkness that betokened "the firing line" of the British and enemy forces.

I stood for some while contemplating the scene, then turned and went down the steps into the cellar and rejoined my two colleagues. It was now time to turn in. The soldier banked up the fire, tidied up a bit, and by consent laid down on his bed of blankets to take third watch, I to do the first, the gendarme second

relief of two hours each until dawn. The time being nearly one o'clock, my watch would be over at three when I should wake the gendarme up.

Soon both men were snoring soundly, I in the meantime sitting near the fire, reading an old magazine. It was dead silent, even the far-off line was quiet. Whether it was the heat of the fire or not I cannot say, but try as I would my eyes kept closing and off I would go into a fitful kind of doze. This happened two or three times, the last phase being when I woke with a start about half-past two. Suddenly my ears caught a sound, a slow kind of movement for all the world sounding like someone cautiously walking about outside—immediately overhead.

I listened. There was no mistake. Something was doing outside. Cautiously I leant over and shook the slumbering men. Both woke with a start. Motioning them not to speak by putting my finger on my lips, I looked at both—pointed upwards, pulled out my revolver and tiptoed to the stairs, both of them at the same time grabbing their weapons.

Somewhere outside the hoot-hoot-hoot of an owl came to our ears. Then all three heard, no mistake this time, the sound of someone walking. Earth and loose brickwork falling above our heads—among the outside ruins of the dead deserted village.

Whoever it was, the nocturnal disturber was not far off. Where exactly was the spot? Who was it—and why? Now was the moment! Quickly I crept up the few remaining stairs and into the fresh morning air. All around by now bright moonlight. I was the first out into it, and somehow, to this day, I thought I saw *something move from the wall in the deep shadow* of the shell-blasted farm in the cellar of which the ammunition dump was stored.

"Did you see anything?" I asked my colleagues, but neither had noticed anything.

With our weapons cocked ready, all of us searched together every inch of the place for over an hour, and in the end we gave it up as a bad job, all agreeing the mysterious noise must have been caused possibly by

some wild cat or dog which we would try and locate as soon as it was daylight.

The remainder of the watch, no doubt due to our state of nerves, passed off uneventfully, the soldier promising me to have a good hunt round during the day to see if he could locate any stray animal, and to let me know his efforts in this direction when I came on duty in the evening.

However, it was destined I should not go back there again or at any other time, for I was packed off by G.H.Q. upon another duty and the investigation given to my colleague, an Intelligence Officer of sound all-round ability. I can state this same officer to-day is alive, well, influential and a present-serving official of high position in one of our Government departments. It is not permissible for me to quote his identity as I am bound by solemn promise. However, he was the final actor in this true, strange phenomenon of "crime and the supernatural"—and it is from his own account to me at the time that I now am going to quote.

That night he took over my duty and joined, with the same gendarme, the sentry on duty in the farm cellar of the village. It was a scene of beautiful moonlight, when he took up first watch soon after midnight. Both his colleagues were lying on their bunks, their uniform tunics undone, but fully dressed otherwise and both awake. The gendarme's automatic lay beside him on the bed, the rifle of the sentry also handy to snatch near his bed-head, the Intelligence man sitting by the fire with his Webley revolver on the table in front of him. All were in instant readiness as—so he told me—they had an intuitive "hunch" something soon was going to happen.

By the way, the sentry had found no trace of any stray animal in the village that day and he had searched high and low. This added to the tension of the eerie experience received the early morning previous, no doubt accentuating the tension.

Suddenly all three heard a sound, it was unmistakable. "Intelligence" looked at his wrist—it wanted five minutes to three in the morning. The eyes of all the

watchers met. No deluding the senses this time. There it was—clump, clump, clump—coming nearer. Steel-shod boots or iron-studded ones worn by military—walking with a regulation step on the cobbles of what once had been the main street.

As the heavy footsteps came nearer the Intelligence man rose. The two others silently did the same, following him to the stairs. The three silently and cautiously got to the top. All around was bathed in moonlight, not a word was spoken. Where they stood was in the shadows—but to their right, not more than a few yards away, they could clearly see near the wall of the farm a form in GERMAN UNIFORM with its back towards them. It seemed to be looking on the ground, and when first seen to be in the act of lifting bricks off the spot near where it stood.

Spellbound they continued to watch this strange proceeding. There was no doubt of it being a German soldier, for the clear light of the moon showed up every detail—and what struck the three watchers most forcibly—the uniform was covered with clay, resembling an appearance of one who has lain in the grave. Then the Intelligence man got control of himself and challenged. Immediately the form turned and the moon's rays revealed its features, which up to this moment had been hidden from view.

The head that turned in their direction was unearthly, horrible and hideous, for it took the form of a fleshless mask. A mere horror, that of a human skull. All three blazed at it with their firearms, but to their amazement nothing now was to be seen. The form had vanished.

For the remainder of that night, thoroughly shaken by their experience and inexplicable circumstances of its cause, the three men stood to and watched until dawn, but the "horror" did not appear again.

The Great War was the greatest human drama of humanity, many strange and awful things happening on all its fronts and in all its theatres daily. But I am doubtful if ever such an incredible report was listened to by a hardened staff at headquarters as the one



Gabrielle Bompard, referred to in page 194 upon the subject of hypnotic suggestion.



An artist's impression of the haunting account referred to in this chapter.

reported by this Intelligence Officer of his experience the night previous in this ruined French village.

Whatever view was taken of it was done with alacrity. The soldier was transferred to the Base, the gendarme to another unit and that same day a special squad of engineers removed the explosives away to a distant depot for safety and future disposal.

In this way the news of this strange experience was not allowed to circulate ; the Intelligence man, naturally, being expected to keep his own counsel by very virtue of the role he played, that of an agent of our secret service.

Then came the solving of the reason for this unnatural cause. For it was obvious to all the authorities concerned that three sensible level-headed men could not be suffering from hallucinations. What was the reason for it ? It had to be solved. Somehow there was an answer to the problem. If it was humanly possible this answer had to be given.

By an arrangement with the French, the first thing done was to check up on the history of the village before war broke out. It took some time, as the local registers and records had all become either destroyed, mislaid or removed since this part of the country fell into the site of the battle area.

The original mayor had to be traced. He was no longer alive, having been killed by the explosion of a shell some six months previous near Armentières. Bit by bit, however, our French liaison and Intelligence department checked back on all, or any original inhabitants that had lived in the village, and by this means began to evolve a definite plan for tracing the strange occurrence.

Some of the original people were living scattered all over France. But in St. Omer a family was traced who were in the village during 1914. They in turn gave information about other refugees, some living in Amiens, Paris and smaller towns well down in the south away from the zone of the armies.

All were seen in turn and closely questioned, and as an analysis of all their individual views, this strange

and cruel story slowly began to take shape and eventually evolve into the only known human answer to the up till then "mysterious query."

This was the story put together from facts collated, soon to be established by undeniable proofs that I will now disclose.

In the waning flush of Von Kluck's sweep to Paris, all was pandemonium in this peaceful little hamlet. The inhabitants who stuck to their homes recalled in the late summer the Germans passing through day after day in endless columns, ever moving up towards the coast.

They gave out they were marching to capture "the channel ports." This would be the time when the Germans and Allied troops were racing towards Boulogne and Calais, the former to capture, the latter to prevent such capture.

Into this village, one day, came a regiment of German infantry, they were dusty, tired, hungry and thirsty from the excessive forced marching some said they had constantly endured the last few days. However, they halted for the night to move off again at dawn, the officers, senior non-commissioned officers and others billeting as and where they could upon the inhabitants.

In one big farmhouse a certain sergeant-major and his company overran the place, the sergeant-major taking up his temporary quarters in the best room of the farm, the place being no other than the same farm, then intact, but at the time of this account a ruin—in the cellar of which the hand grenades and bombs were stored. It was from this very same cellar the trouble originated, for at that time it was stocked with bottles of wine, and upon discovering the find, this particular sergeant-major soon took advantage of it.

The farm at the time was in charge of a comely young married woman and her only child, the owner having fled and left her behind in charge upon the first news of the initial German advance towards the village. This young woman with the old priest and several other courageous souls decided to stay on and trust to their undefended state to protect them from the invading

enemy troops. With the exception of this particular sergeant-major, a brute of a man, and a clique of other drunken soldiers he had round him, the bulk of the German troops were well-conducted in their behaviour towards the few inhabitants during their short stay in the village and its surroundings.

However, just after dawn, firing could be heard, gradually growing in its intensity as the pursuing Allied guns began to get into range on the enemy retiring towards Lille and other places further north.

During the night in the farm the party of drunken German soldiery had been singing and holding revel until well into the morning, the young woman being subjected all the time to the unwelcome advances and attentions of this drunken non-commissioned officer. Nor would he allow any other man to go near her, telling all present in his maudlin way that she was his.

So serious did her position become that in the early hours of the morning she slipped out into the dawn with her child, and sought the only protection she thought available—that of the old priest. Waking him from his sleep, the old man was told of her predicament.

“Have no fear, child,” he said. “They will be leaving soon. I will stay by your side until this happens.”

But by this time the drunken brute had followed her to the old priest’s house, and seeing what she had done, also possibly fearing they were going to report his conduct to the officers, advanced upon both menacingly with his revolver, accusing both of being “cursed spies.”

At this moment a sighting shell from the first Allied gun announced the dawn with a whistling rush over the village followed by a crescendo all around. Immediately an alarm broke out, German officers and men, rushing from their billets, yells, shouts, orders and commands flying in all directions as the order was given to get out of the village at all costs.

At the height of all this confusion and startling reality of the grim horror of war, shells crashing, rifle

fire sounding in all directions, surprised German soldiery rushed by, pell-mell, in their effort to escape from the near approach of the enemy. We have an imaginary picture at dawn of what happened in those early 1914 days when movement and fighting was at its fiercest.

Often these poor, courageous, simple, country folk were caught between two fires, a fact which often tied the hands of our gunners when chasing the enemy back in the "race for the channel ports."

According to two living witnesses' accounts, one found at St. Omar, the other later at Hazebrouck, the sergeant-major shot the priest, woman and child without warning. The mother and child died on the spot, the old priest living a little longer, being heard to say, as he lay dying, by one of these witnesses, when pointing towards the German :

"Wicked man, your spirit will live on. When your hour comes, you will come back here in repentance until God thinks fit to absolve your soul."

At this second a shell from one of the French '75' guns fell not far away. When the shock of the explosion was over, three men lay on the ground, two wounded, one dead—the latter the German sergeant-major.

That same evening the soldier and his three victims were buried by the French, the three civilians in one grave, their murderer in another, both burial places side by side near the wall of the farm.

An exhumation was made to verify this account and as it had been related so it turned out to be in fact, a skeleton of the soldier being found as well as three more, two of a woman and child, the other that of a man, the garb still around the decomposed frame betokening that of a priest.

What then is the deduction of this strange true story ? Was I mistaken when I thought I saw that shadowy form underneath the farm wall ? Were the other three men also ? It is strange that the sounds were only heard overhead from down below in the cellar, more strange still that the bodies of all four dead persons lay just above—without one of us knowing—and on the very spot where the apparition was seen.

The elucidation for this account can be more scientifically explained by an extract from Chapter III, page 62, *Why I Believe in Personal Immortality*, Sir Oliver Lodge.

“ There are some who think that *violent emotion* can be likewise unconsciously *stored in matter* ; so that a room where a tragedy has occurred, shall exert an influence on the next generation, or rather on anyone sufficiently sensitive to feel it. In this way it is hoped that some day the *strange influence of certain localities whereby a tragedy seems to be re-enacted*, can be rationally explained, and the puzzling phenomenon popularly known as ‘haunting’ can be removed from the region of supernatural to the domain of fact.”

CHAPTER XI

The Case of Mrs. Watkins. How did this girl in Monmouthshire die ? Aid of clairvoyancy permitted by police. Its results clear a suspect. Murder not the cause. Official opinion and decision. The Bourne-mouth murder of Irene Wilkins. Clairvoyancy again comes to police aid. Investigators on the hunt for her murderer attend a remarkable séance. What was claimed and achieved by such results. A published book for private circulation printed, called *The Spirit of Irene*. Psychic help appealed to by a witness in the trial of Alloway, the murderer. The result. Solving another crime : the occult again figures. This time the murder of Irene Munro at Eastbourne. Another book issued as a consequence. Remarkable account of its author. What the police learnt and acted upon. The arrest of Field and Gray for the murder of Irene Munro.

IN the hills and vales of Monmouthshire, they still talk of the strange end of Iris Watkins, who on an August night in 1925 was seen alive for the last time. An extensive search led to the finding of her bruised and battered body in a culvert at Blackwood, six weeks after her strange disappearance from her home. A coroner and his jury failed to agree as to the cause of her death. The jury found that she had been murdered, but the evidence adduced at the inquest might with equal ease have been applied to suicide or accidental death.

The only solution of the mystery of the death of Iris Watkins has been put forward by a famous London clairvoyant, of whom I shall have more to say later, and, of course, his evidence is inadmissible. None the less, this case provides an amazing example of his powers ; all the more remarkable because, in this instance, another clairvoyant, approached without his knowledge, and in entirely different circumstances, told a story agreeing in every particular with that of this gentleman.

Are we to accept the story of Iris Watkins' end ? Frankly, I am prepared to do so, because the attitude

of the Chief Constable of Monmouthshire is entirely in keeping with it. This officer refused, in the face of inflamed public opinion, to re-open the Watkins case. As a police officer he knew all the facts—facts which the public did not know—and if his decision was on those lines, then he had every good reason for it. Of course, I do not for one moment suggest that the Chief Constable was in any way affected by what the clairvoyants have claimed. I merely say that as he decided against arresting anybody for the murder of Iris Watkins, his own theory of the case must be that she was not murdered. It is strange indeed that the clairvoyants should be led by their beliefs into a similar conviction, without one-thousandth part of the Chief Constable's knowledge of the case.

The facts of this peculiar coincidence were revealed at the inquest. A newspaper reporter secured from the dead girl's mother a purse which the girl had handled, and brought it to the psychometrist at his London studio. I might stress the point here that it was a man's purse, so that he could have no possible clue as to its owner's identity—rather, were he not possessed of genuine second sight, it would have tended to confuse him.

Without disclosing his identity, the reporter asked the medium to tell him what he could about the owner of the purse. He replied that it was definitely connected with a girl of nice personality who had recently died, and that she was grateful to the reporter for acting as her intermediary with those still living in the world which she had just left.

He went on to say that the girl was anxious to get into touch with her people, but that as they were diffident about spiritualism she could not reach them. She was a school teacher, and very artistic. He believed that there had been some minor trouble over an insurance policy, but that it had not been serious. However, he was sure that the girl had met her death from drowning, and that earlier there had been an attempt at "bodily assault."

The reporter then disclosed his identity, but the

gentleman's only answer was that in that case he would accept no fee, as he was a journalist himself and only too ready to assist a fellow member of his profession. Subsequently, the reporter visited the dead girl's mother, who agreed that the description given by the medium was correct in every particular, and that the insurance quarrel arose over some detail connected with the girl's unemployment card.

Now the psychometrist was very definite in his statement that the girl was not murdered. After the attempt at assault, he said that the girl committed suicide, and on the evidence this was not an unreasonable hypothesis. At all events, the reporter handed his story over to the authorities, who promptly informed him that a similar story had been told by another local spiritualist. There was not the remotest chance that the two clairvoyants had been in communication with one another. In fact, they were perfect strangers who have not, I believe, met to this day.

The jury found that Iris Watkins had been murdered, and popular opinion supported the verdict. On the other hand the Coroner, Mr. W. R. Dauncey, expressed his profound disagreement with the decision. The police were complimented by coroner and jury alike on the thoroughness of their investigation, and there is not the least shadow of doubt that they entirely agreed with the clairvoyants' opinion, backed up as it was by the bulk of medical evidence.

Curious conflicts occurred in the medical testimony, and while most of the doctors called were of opinion that death from drowning was a reasonable hypothesis, two medical men entirely disagreed. In fact so marked was the difference of opinion that the district became divided into two camps, the stronger being that which firmly believed that the girl had been murdered.

But one is ever too ready to upbraid the police, without pausing to think that in practically every murder case the authorities know their man, even though they have no case against him. I am in a position definitely to state that the Chief Constable of Monmouthshire had satisfied himself that the only man

against whom the finger of suspicion could with reason be pointed was entirely innocent. He was a young man who had been Iris Watkins' close friend, and not unnaturally a good deal of evil tongue-wagging went on concerning him.

That psychical and metaphysical methods will, as claimed by a well-known doctor, elucidate any murder mystery may be considered fantastic ; but, from the sum of my experience as a detective officer, I have no hesitation in declaring that the day will come when psychic help will be sought as a matter of course by the police when the solution of a crime eludes them.

It is not commonly known that such aid was, in fact, accepted by the Bournemouth police as long ago as 1922. It was as a direct result of spiritualistic communications that Allaway was arrested, convicted and hanged for a brutal murder.

Nervous, one supposes, of hostile criticism and scepticism, the local police authorities did not pay public tribute to the source of their information, but it is nevertheless indisputable.

In December, 1921, a servant girl named Irene Wilkins was decoyed to Bournemouth by means of a bogus telegram offering her an attractive situation. She was met at the station by the murderer, who subsequently assaulted and killed her, throwing the body into some furze bushes and escaping without leaving behind a single material clue.

The local authorities did not call in the assistance of Scotland Yard, and for a long time their painstaking investigations proved abortive. They had, indeed, reached a complete impasse, and it looked as though this murder would pass into the category of unsolved crimes. Such indeed would have been the case but for the information and clues supplied by a group of Bournemouth spiritualists.

A psychically sensitive woman living in Boscombe could not rid herself of the feeling that the murderer of Irene Wilkins was still in the neighbourhood. In the hope that she might be instrumental in bringing him to justice, she, in company with friends, visited the

scene of the crime, grew convinced of her ability to help, and later wrote to a local police inspector suggesting that attempts should be made to get in touch with the spirit of the murdered girl. As might have been expected, no reply was received.

Then, one day, in connection with an entirely different and quite trivial matter, a policeman called at the medium's house. In the course of conversation, sufficient was told him of the possibilities of psychic science to induce him to report to his superiors, who, at their wits' end, were ready to follow any trial which held out the slightest hope of leading them to the murderer; and shortly afterwards began one of the most amazing series of spiritualistic séances on record.

Every sitting was attended by various members of the Bournemouth police force, and those séances remain in my memory as providing the most astonishing and convincing proof of the value of supernormal science in the detection of crime.

The police, now eager to afford all the assistance in their power, brought with them the clothing worn by the murdered girl. At the very first sitting any lingering scepticism they may have felt must have been swept away, for the medium was controlled by a spirit which beyond all shadow of doubt was that of Irene.

These hard-headed, prosaic, matter-of-fact detectives must have had quite a lot of preconceived ideas shattered on that first winter eveing which gave them a glimpse of the spiritual world.

Now, for the first time, the murderer Allaway was described, and in detail. The first material step had been taken towards his detection; spiritual forces were working to avenge a foul murder, and from now on the net was to close gradually, relentlessly, remorselessly around the unwitting Allaway.

At subsequent séances—they lasted for five months, the police attended every one—bit by bit the whole crime was relived and reconstructed. It became known exactly who had committed the murder and all that had happened. The task of the detectives now was to find the man and prove the evidence given them.

At one of the early sittings they were directed to the house where he lived, and in March, 1922, Thomas Henry Allaway, was arrested on a minor charge in connection with a fraudulent cheque, and was remanded, the while enquiries were persisted in, guided by information given to the police at the séances.

A certain Sunday newspaper of July 9th, 1922, said, of Allaway's conviction: "The Bournemouth murder will go down to history as one of the finest detective stories in our police annals." So indeed it will; but it might never have had a place in detective history had it not been for the aid of occult science offered to and accepted by the Bournemouth police.

The story of these séances was told by one of the participants in a little volume entitled *The Spirit of Irene*, to which I am indebted for refreshing my memory as to the details of the supernatural assistance rendered to the police.

A curious incident occurred at Allaway's trial. A material date was the subject of argument; it was important that this should be established by one of the witnesses for the Crown, and he had forgotten it! He hesitated for some seconds in the witness-box.

"My mind," he said afterwards, "was a perfect blank. Then I remembered that Pat had promised to help us, and mentally I asked him to do so."

Pat was one of the spirits present throughout the séances, at which this witness had also been present.

"Immediately," he went on, "it was as if a sheet of paper was placed before my eyes on which was written in large letters 'January 6th'."

It proved to be the correct date. This is the only instance within my knowledge of material evidence being supplied to a witness, while under cross-examination, by psychic means.

The sittings were continued right up to the end of the trial, the progress of which was accurately predicted from day to day. On the final day the medium, sitting in her own home, actually described the closing scenes and correctly forecast the verdict.

Who that was present on that occasion will ever

forget the scene in the Court House at Winchester. The stern, impassive features of Mr. Justice Avory ; the jury, preoccupied and serious as only men can be who hold a fellow man's life in their hands ; Allaway in the dock, a slight, impotent figure between the two stalwart police officers, his loose mouth twitching, in his face the horrible realization of his coming doom ; the wide-eyed, curious figures in the public gallery.

The judge has assumed the black cap. His remarks are few but scathing. Here in the dock is a man convicted of a crime foul and horrible, for whom there can be no sympathy, no hope of remission.

"... You too shall die !" Mr. Justice Avory is saying, pointing a denunciatory finger at the pallid figure in the dock.

From the neighbouring barrack-square blared forth the bugle call for defaulters. In the spirit world, over which, our medium told us, a terrible hush had fallen, that bugle call found its echo, as punishment upon the wayward soul of Allaway was pronounced by his earthly judge's spiritual prototype.

Eastbourne is a favourite holiday resort of many people, and it is indeed unfortunate that this beautiful seaside town should, in recent years, have been the scene of three of the worst murders within living memory. It was to Eastbourne that Irene Munro, a pretty young Scottish typist, went for a summer holiday in August, 1920, never dreaming that her long-looked-for vacation would be fraught with such terrible consequences.

On August 20th, 1920, children playing on the sands on the lonely stretch of beach between Eastbourne and Pevensey stumbled over an object which protruded from the sand. Curiously they dug, and then fled in terror as a human foot and leg were unearthed. Police were rushed to the scene, and within a few hours, Chief Inspector Mercer of Scotland Yard was in charge of the investigations into one of the grimmest murders in criminal history.

Preliminary medical examination of the girl's body disclosed terrible wounds, obviously inflicted by

some great weight being dropped from a height on to the still living girl. Shortly afterwards the remains were identified by an Eastbourne landlady as those of Irene Munro, a young typist on holiday from her home in Scotland. Widespread enquiries were immediately instituted by the police, but after some days they were still without a clue as to the identity of the murderer or murderers of Irene Munro.

I do not propose to establish a claim that the police would never have caught the murderers without psychic aid, but I will merely relate the strange sequence of events resulting from the introduction of a spiritualistic medium into this baffling case. First, I should point out to the reader that Eastbourne was packed with holiday visitors at the time and that, as there were only three or four people who knew the dead girl, it was extremely unlikely that any person would come forward who would remember having seen the girl just before her death. The police were thorough, and carefully investigated the girl's life in Scotland, with a view to finding some possible motive for the murder. They drew a blank, and were forced to the conclusion that Irene Munro was the victim of some person she met during her brief stay in the seaside resort.

Now Scotland Yard rarely fails to solve a murder mystery, even though it may never bring anyone to book for the crime. This might well have happened in the case of Irene Munro, for against the two men detained on suspicion soon after the discovery of the body, there was not one shred of evidence which would have convinced a jury as to their guilt. I am constrained to believe that so experienced an officer as Chief Inspector Mercer would not have charged the men suspected, unless he was convinced in his own mind that the evidence he could offer against them was such as no jury could reject. In view of these indisputable facts, the psychic angle of this remarkable case is all the more fascinating, and I propose to relate in detail precisely what occurred.

Naturally, the detectives could not consult a medium, even if they had faith in such methods. But Mr.

Harold Speer, a famous journalist could, and did, seek the services of a well-known medium and clairvoyant. Nor was this the only occasion on which Mr. Speer sought occult aid, for in another crime some time afterwards he approached another London psychometrist who materially assisted him.

Mr. Speer has told the full story in his book *Secret History of Great Crimes*, and says that when he approached the medium she asked him point blank whether he believed her powers would be of use to him. He impresses the fact that he was frankly sceptical, all his journalistic training being instinctively against such a proposition. None the less he replied in the affirmative, and when the medium requested that she be placed near the spot where the girl was found, he arranged a midnight séance at the Crumbles.

Mr. Speer secured certain articles of the dead girl's possessions, and handed these to the medium, Miss Groebel, as soon as they reached the rendezvous, Miss Groebel grasped the articles, fondling them just as the poor girl herself might have done in joy at their return. Then, from the woman's lips, came words in tones entirely different from her own.

As if it was the spirit of murdered Irene Munro speaking, she begged her mother to forgive her. She fearfully asked that those on earth pray for her—all the words coming in broken, sobbing gasps from the medium's lips.

Affected, of course, by the eerie scene, but in full possession of his keen journalistic faculties, Mr. Speer noted every word as it came from the woman's lips. His pencil, like some grim finger of Fate itself, recorded the words which were to lead the murderers to the scaffold. He heard the spirit voice say that she was Irene Munro, and that she had been killed by a man with a large stone. Let us dissect this story.

It was early proved beyond any doubt that Irene Munro had been attacked, knocked unconscious, and that her murderers had killed her by dropping a heavy stone on her head.

In justice, it must be admitted that Miss Groebel



Police at work upon scene of the crime, in three sensational cases, namely the Sevenoaks, Crowborough and Epsom murders.

had learned these facts from the Press, but she could not possibly have known what she next revealed.

"I see my murderers in a small hotel," the voice droned on. "It has a white front, and is called the Albemarle."

Now Harold Speer, journalistic, sceptic—seeking definite proof before he will believe—tells us that sceptics may, if they wish, dismiss the affair as coincidence, but that it was to the Albemarle that the murderers went immediately after the crime. How could the medium have known this?

Next day Mr. Speer handed the results of the séance to Chief Inspector Mercer, and that keen detective did not scoff. On the contrary he went direct to the Albemarle Hotel, where he found the one missing link in the chain which was to send the murderers to the scaffold. Twenty-four hours later, Jack Alfred Field and William Thomas Gray were charged with the murder of Irene Munro.

Subsequent events revealed that Gray, the older man, had carefully prepared Field in the story he was to tell the police, and no amount of questioning could, in the preliminary stages, break that story down. But when the accused stood in the dock at Lewes Assizes the prosecution put before the jury a case for their conviction which they could not reject. Briefly the facts were as follows:

Irene Munro met Field and Gray in the ordinary flirtatious seaside manner. One may not like to think of one's daughter doing such things, but the fact remains that such affairs are usually innocent enough; though the case of poor Irene Munro may well prove the inadvisability of such flirtations.

A walk along the Crumbles was suggested, and when an isolated spot was reached the pair attempted to steal the girl's handbag. She resisted, and in the struggle that followed one of the two men struck the girl with his walking stick, the ferrule catching her in the mouth, and inflicting a serious wound. Bleeding profusely, she fell to the ground, and when they had callously taken the few pounds in her handbag, the two

scoundrels calmly dashed a great stone on to the upturned features of the unconscious girl and battered her face out of all recognition.

The two men then went to the Albemarle Hotel, where they flirted with the barmaids, spending freely the money which they took from their poor victim. Evidence from the girls in the hotel—secured as a result of the séance revelations—was a material factor in the case against the accused, and the defence could not break down their cast-iron testimony.

For the defence, both men claimed that they had drawn money from the Labour Exchange on the morning of the crime and that this was the money they spent in the bar. It is no unreasonable assumption to believe that, without the Albemarle link, the chain of evidence would not have convicted, and the two scoundrels would have escaped the just penalty of their crime.

The jury took only an hour to find the accused men guilty, but they made a recommendation to mercy, which hardly tends to strengthen one's belief in the jury system. They made the recommendation on the grounds that the crime was not premeditated, though how they reached this conclusion it is difficult, on the evidence, to decide.

However, the recommendation was disregarded, and in accordance with the sentence passed by Mr. Justice Avory, they were "hanged by the neck until dead." Perhaps, despite the spirit world's objection to legal vengeance, which I have already mentioned in these pages, there was little lamentation in the next world when—and if—the souls of the murderers passed from their earthly bodies.

CHAPTER XII

A well-known English clairvoyant's account of a visit in the United States of America. An account of crime and the supernatural or occult, figuring in murder. What the sheriff told him at Fort Worth. The crime, and how the sheriff sought the aid of clairvoyance. Professor Sharpe of Texas—what he divined—the police act. Arrest of the murderer, his trial, confession and execution. Another amazing instance demonstrated in a big bank robbery. A cashier entirely unsuspected accused. His complicity in collusion with another "outside" accomplice discovered. Arrest and conviction of the entire gang as a result.

THE same clairvoyant who figured in the case of Iris Watkins gave another account of crime and the occult that he experienced in America.

This story was first placed under my name when it appeared in *The Outspan* of South Africa. It had been included by a representative of a syndicating agency without my knowledge or that of the gentleman concerned. The account causing great comment throughout the Union by reason of its remarkable psychic consequences.

The well-known clairvoyant wrote to me expressing annoyance that I quoted his name without authority, and informed me he did not wish it done again in future.

On writing to him and explaining my entire innocence for the inclusion of his name, he most courteously, when I spoke to him on the telephone, asked me to come along and see him.

I did so, and we had a long chat together, also before we parted he gave me his full consent for the future—if I should want it—that I could use his name. But on the grounds of policy I have decided not to do so. However, his psychic qualities are remarkable and if required, I can, through the courtesy of my publishers, forward his name to any reader who may be interested.

Here is the account from his American experiences as I know of it and about it.

One of the most versatile and best known of clairvoyants famed throughout the world for his astonishing occult powers, is the gentleman to whom I have made reference, and I propose to devote this chapter to his American counterpart, Professor Sharpe, of Fort Worth, Texas.

Although the Professor is famous throughout America, it is difficult for the average man to understand his peculiar powers unless they are simply explained to him. That is what this gentleman has done for me, and I am anxious to pass on his information to the reader.

He is highly popular in America, where he has travelled extensively and given many remarkable demonstrations of his unusual powers. During a recent visit he went to Fort Worth, where he met the famous Sheriff, "Red" Wright, one of the best-known law-enforcement officers in America. Sheriff Wright had attended several of his lectures and was keenly interested. He invited the psychometrist to visit him, and talked about crime problems in Texas.

After they had talked for a time, Sheriff Wright rose from his chair and brought out a picture which he showed to the clairvoyant. It revealed a hard-faced young man handcuffed between two deputy-sheriffs. Turning to the clairvoyant, Sheriff Wright said quietly :

"That man was brought to the gallows by a clairvoyant."

He was interested. "You mean, of course," he suggested, "that he was captured through the medium of the occult."

"Exactly," replied the Sheriff. "Would you like to hear the story?"

"Very much," he said, and the Sheriff told him.

Some years before, Fort Worth had been stirred by a particularly revolting murder. Because the family of the dead girl desire that the tragedy be forgotten,

this gentleman has refrained from giving me names and dates. However, anyone wishing to verify the facts may do so through me, the gentleman concerned or Sheriff Wright. I am retaining the essentials of the affair, and eliminating only proper names and dates.

The body of Emily Farmer was found in a ditch some miles from Forth Worth in an advanced state of decomposition. The girl had been missing for over a week, and search parties had been scouring the countryside for traces of her. When found, there was not a second's doubt that she had been violently assaulted and murdered, after having made a desperate fight for her life. It was one of those crimes for which there was no apparent motive—save a purely sexual one—and for which innumerable suspects were held.

Months passed, and it looked as though the murder must remain a mystery and blot on the escutcheon of "Red" Wright. The Sheriff became most gloomy, for he was exceedingly vigilant in bringing the criminal to book, and proud of the fact that under his jurisdiction no murderer had ever escaped his just retribution. It was in this frame of mind that he had recourse to Professor Sharpe, and laid his problem before him.

In previous articles I have shown how attempts have been made to track murderers through the intervention of the spirit world. This case was different, Professor Sharpe was an occultist with undoubted psychic powers, but it was not spiritualist aid which the Sheriff sought; he wanted to utilize Professor Sharpe's amazing powers of second sight, for which he was already famous throughout many states.

On being consulted, Professor Sharpe expressed his willingness to assist, and requested that a portion of the dead girl's clothing be handed to him. Taking it carefully between thumb and forefinger, he raised it to his nostrils and closed his eyes. When he had finished he turned to the Sheriff.

"This man is in Kansas City," he told the officer. "At half-past two on Thursday morning, he will

be at 354 Cowley Street. I can see him. Let me describe him."

Then followed a minutely detailed description of the murderer. Sheriff Wright was nonplussed; but he was too experienced an officer to let any chance slip by. Within a few minutes a carload of detectives, armed with hastily typewritten descriptions of the wanted man, were on their way to Kansas City.

Amongst the hard-boiled detectives there was not one who attached the slightest value to this latest "clue" as supplied to the Sheriff from such an unorthodox source. They were therefore in a decidedly unhopeful frame of mind when they reached Kansas City and set out for a preliminary look-over of the address given by the clairvoyant.

The house was found to be a common lodging-house of the poorest type. Careful enquiries elicited the fact that nobody answering the description of the wanted man was staying there, and the detectives wired Sheriff Wright to this effect. His curt reply was that they were to remain there until further orders, and that he would hold them personally responsible if they were not at their posts at the appointed hour.

At 2 p.m. on Thursday afternoon, two frowsy loafers lounged about the entrance hall of the doss-house. They were indistinguishable from the rest of the unkempt crowd who sat idly around, but their keen eyes never left the doorway. Minutes passed, and the tension increased. Both detectives felt that there might be something in the clairvoyant's story after all.

The chime of an adjacent church clock announced the hour of two-thirty, and while it was still echoing an individual answering in every particular to the description of the wanted man entered. In a trice the detectives were on him.

He was a big fellow, and put up a hell of a fight. Police officers rushed to the aid of the plain-clothes' men, and within a few minutes the prisoner, cursing foully, was hustled into the nearest police station. Half a dozen questions convinced the detectives that he had been in Fort Worth at the time of the murder,

and immediate arrangements were made for his extradition to Texas. Several weeks later, the man was convicted of first degree murder on a cast-iron case put forward by the State Attorney. The defence secured the debarring of an alleged confession, but the State won its case when it called witnesses who proved beyond any doubt that the accused was the murderer. After his capture, many details were found to fit in with his movements, and a knife with which the murder was committed was traced to him. Just before his execution, the man admitted that he was guilty of the crime and told a story which tallied in every particular with the State's case against him.

Naturally Professor Sharpe gained great fame as a result of this case, and for a long time he was besieged with requests to solve various mysteries. He was not at all anxious to do so, however, and announced that he would utilize his powers only in exceptional cases and when the police were completely baffled. He had, however, formed a great liking for Sheriff Wright, and promised to aid him whenever his services were required. Like a wise man, Sheriff Wright did not take undue advantage of this generous offer, and reserved the services of his friend until such time as he would find them most useful.

Such a time was not long in coming. The Fort Worth branch of one of the best-known banks in America was broken into, and a strong room opened with the aid of a duplicate key. It was immediately obvious that the job must have been carried out with inside aid, and a careful enquiry was instituted into the private lives of all the employees.

The investigators drew a blank. True, they found that quite a number of the bank's officials were short of ready cash, but it was impossible for the finger of suspicion to be pointed at any of them. Two very high officials were the only men to have access to the keys of the vaults, and there was not the slightest scrap of evidence against either of them.

The loss to the bank had been a heavy one. Notes and bullion to the value of £28,000 had been removed

from the vaults, and a large reward was offered for its recovery. Naturally, detectives engaged on the case worked the harder with this incentive, but their efforts were unavailing, and at last Sheriff Wright decided to call in Professor Sharpe.

The Professor said that he could promise nothing, but that he would use his powers towards tracking the criminal. This was quite good enough for the Sheriff, and for other officers who had had experience of Sharpe's amazing powers in the murder case. Accordingly they went to the bank, where the Professor glanced idly around the chamber.

"Show me where they entered," he said abruptly, and he was taken to a window which had been forced by the unknown robbers. He looked at it intently for a moment, then rested his hands on the sill.

"You want the assistant-cashier," he said quietly "and a tall young man with a broken nose. I think you will find that the latter is known as Freddy, and that he is a well-known bank robber. He acted in league with the official, who took an impression of the vault key in a piece of wax. You will also find that they quarrelled as they were leaving the bank as to who should carry the bullion. Finally Freddy took the larger load, and did not share out properly with his confederate."

Instantly the assistant-cashier was interrogated, and within a few minutes he broke down completely and confessed. He named, as his companion in crime, Freddy Longmore, who was well known to the police, having served a number of terms of imprisonment for offences of that nature. Freddy was traced to Philadelphia, and when arrested a large sum in currency was found on him. These notes were found to correspond with the numbers on the stolen bills and the case against the official and the thief was complete. They both received long terms of imprisonment, and Professor Sharpe was paid the reward offered by a grateful banking corporation.

Incidentally, the assistant-cashier confessed that he had taken the impression of the vault key in wax, and

that it was the key made from that impression that gained them entry to the strong-room. The fact of a quarrel between the thieves was also elicited, and other minor details forecast by the professor were found to be accurate in every particular.

CHAPTER XIII

The strange murder case of Freda Lesser. Her death at the hands of her fiancé, Harry New. The strange facts revealed at his trial. All evidence points to wilful murder. The jury retire. At the same hour, entirely oblivious to this human drama—a séance is being held by a famous American medium at Los Angeles. A voice comes through—that of the murdered girl, Freda Lesser—what she told the astonished psychic circle of listeners. The dash to the Court. The doctor of psychology gives evidence. The judge's warning to the jury. What the jury said through their foreman—and the result. Harry New acquitted of murder—and sentenced to ten years' for manslaughter.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL evidence often leaves a shadow of doubt in some people's mind, but unfortunately in most murder cases it is all that is available. Only very rarely is a crime committed in the presence of an eyewitness, and it is the detective's job to check up on existing facts, and to connect the crime beyond reasonable doubt with the guilty party.

If the dead could speak the solution of crimes would be an easy matter, and that is the idea that has constantly recurred in the mind of more than one famous detective of my acquaintance. I have known of several instances where well-known detectives have approached psychic mediums for aid in solving mysteries which have kept them awake at night. For it must be remembered that the zealous detective knows little rest or relaxation while he is engaged on a case. "Ward of the Yard," as he was known—for example, one of the greatest man-hunters Scotland Yard ever knew, never troubled about sleep during the investigation of a big case. I have known him snatch a few hour's rest in a big chair in his office only when he literally collapsed, and I have known many able detectives affected more or less in the same way in their anxiety to solve some knotty problem.

One can readily realize, therefore, that some detectives would not think twice of approaching a psychic medium in a private capacity if they thought that they could get the slightest clue to a murderer's identity. There have been cases where such visits have been resorted to—but as a rule the results are never made public, but I am proposing to deal here with the strange story of Harry New, whose trial marked a new era in American criminal history.

In July, 1919, Miss Freda Lesser, a beautiful young Los Angeles girl, was looking forward to an early marriage to Harry New, a young salesman with whom she had been keeping company for almost two years. There was no cloud on the horizon of the future, and the parents of both young people were as keen on an early marriage as the couple themselves.

Then, abruptly, Harry New dropped a bombshell. He no longer cared for the girl, and bluntly told her that he did not intend to marry her. She was horrified, and begged him to carry out his original intention. New, however, was adamant, and told her that he would not see her again.

Naturally, the news of the rift spread quickly, and friends and relatives of the two young people became divided into opposite camps. In a few days the erstwhile lovers became bitter enemies, and there was not much genuine surprise when Freda Lesser was found dead with a bullet through her heart.

Police officers called to the girl's home where the body lay, made a cursory examination which showed them that the girl had been shot at point-blank range. Few enquiries were necessary to ascertain the condition of affairs between the girl and her former sweetheart, and detectives were sent out to bring in Harry New.

Things looked very black when it was found that the young man had disappeared, and he had already been tried and convicted by public opinion when he was picked up in another city and escorted back to Los Angeles for trial. The police considered that they had a cast-iron case against Harry New; and who shall blame them in the circumstances?

The defence realized that a difficult task lay before them. In the privacy of his cell New informed his lawyers that the girl had threatened to shoot herself, and that she had been accidentally killed during the struggle for the weapon. I have known experience of similar cases, and I know that such a defence is a most difficult one to prove. Expert gunsmiths can approximate the speed of bullets, work out how a gun was fired, and trace the bullets; but their evidence is rarely definite when it comes to proving who was responsible during a struggle for the weapon being discharged.

When the trial opened, the prosecuting counsel asked for the conviction of Harry New on a charge of first degree murder. He told the jury that on the night of her death New had visited the girl in answer to an urgent telephone message. She had been killed by a bullet from a weapon which was subsequently traced to New, and which he was known to be carrying on the night of the murder. The prosecutor stressed the fact of the couple's estrangement, and painted New in the blackest colours. Was it not reasonable, he asked, to assume that a man who had behaved so badly to this young woman would not have gone a step further and forever silenced her when he realized that she was such a menace to his future?

"New must have known," thundered the prosecutor, that all decent people would turn against him for his treatment of Freda Lesser. He stood to lose his friends, perhaps his employment, if his vile conduct became public property. The poor, dead girl was trying to make it just that. She wanted everyone to know the kind of man New was. Can we not assume that this vain, arrogant, selfish young man murdered her to still her accusing tongue? You may believe that such a deed was possible only in a fit of violent temper. Very well, believe that, but understand that it constitutes first degree murder, and that it is your duty to convict Harry New of that crime."

The prosecutor then completed formal police evidence and called a firearms expert who testified that

in his opinion the pistol had been deliberately fired by New at close quarters. He discounted the suggestion of a struggle, but on examination by the defence, admitted that the weapon might have been discharged during a fight for its possession.

Other evidence showed that the pistol belonged to Harry New, and that he had it in his possession when he left his home to visit Freda Lesser on the fatal night. The case looked indeed black against Harry New when the young man took the witness stand on his own behalf.

He remained perfectly calm throughout the barrage of questions fired at him with bewildering rapidity by the prosecutor. Never once did he deviate in the smallest detail from his story, which was that Freda Lesser had snatched the weapon from him and in the struggle for its possession she was killed. The prosecution elicited the fact that he had produced the pistol, but he said that he did so in a half-joking manner. As a matter of fact, New said he really had it in his mind to make everything up with the girl.

"Do you still love her?" asked the prosecutor.

"Yes," replied New quietly. "Now that she is gone, I realize that she is the only woman I could ever love."

"Then why did you break away in such a brutal fashion?" flung back the lawyer.

"I cannot say," New told him, staring straight ahead. "I believe that some evil influence made me do it."

That night the defence concluded its case, put forward with great eloquence, but lacking conviction. It was obvious that the prosecution had left a definite impression on the jury's mind, and that impression was not favourable to Harry New. The judge deferred his summing up until the following morning, and ordered the jury to be locked up for the night.

At approximately the same hour as the jury retired, a famous American medium was in séance at an exclusive gathering of spiritualists in a fashionable quarter of Los Angeles. Suddenly she writhed violently

and announced to the gathering that an unknown spirit was trying to speak. Usually spirits only spoke to her when they had messages for someone in the room, but this spirit was pushing forward in great anxiety. She described the girl. Someone in the audience shouted: "Ask her if her name is Freda?"

"Yes, yes, it is," gasped the medium. "She wants to talk. She tells me that she is in great torment. Someone she loves is in terrible danger—she fears that he is going to die. She speaks of a struggle for a pistol. Yes, yes, Freda, wait, wait; I will let you speak."

At that moment the medium's voice altered, and became that of a much younger woman. Plainly the audience heard the words, as they sat rooted to their seats in astonishment.

"I am Freda Lesser. Oh, please save poor Harry. He did not kill me. I have heard that evil spirits up here took possession of him and made him throw my love aside. He was always a wonderful boy, and I know he loved me. He loves me now. I heard him say it this afternoon."

It is unlikely that the medium could have heard of Harry New's statement that afternoon, as she had not seen any of the journals containing detailed reports of the trial.

"He came to me that night," the voice continued, "and was quite friendly. Then he changed suddenly and drew his pistol. He told me he ought to shoot me. I snatched at the gun, and got it in my hand. Then I raised it to my head and told him I would shoot myself if he would not take me back. He cried out and told me that he loved me. Then he tried to take the gun from me. We struggled. It was pointed towards me, and I deliberately pulled the trigger. Harry never wanted to kill me. Tell everyone; tell the judge that he loves me still."

The voice died away as it reached an intensity of emotion. Everyone in the room was affected, and it was some time before the medium emerged from her trance. There was a buzz of conversation. A dis-

tinguished doctor in the audience announced that he would tell what he had heard in the court next morning.

As soon as the court reassembled the doctor went on to the witness stand and announced that he wished to give evidence affecting the case. Instantly the prosecutor, who had been informed of the nature of the medical man's evidence, objected. The defence claimed that the evidence was admissible. The judge ruled that it might be heard, but warned the jury that they must keep an open mind.

Several questions were asked by jurors during the doctor's evidence, and when the defence closed the judge commenced his summing up. He again warned the jury that the evidence of the spirit voice must not be accepted, unless the jurors were convinced in their own minds that it was really the spirit of the dead girl that spoke through the medium.

"Beyond all doubt," he concluded, "there exist phenomena of which we know nothing. It is by no means impossible that the dead girl did speak in this way. But you must remember that there is no shred of evidence to prove it, and must be guided solely by your beliefs."

After an adjournment of thirty-four minutes the jury unanimously found Harry New guilty of murder in the second degree. This is the American equivalent of manslaughter, and New was sentenced to ten years in the penitentiary at San Quentin.

CHAPTER XIV

The murder of Stamford White, American multi-millionaire, by Harry K. Thaw. The first instance of a defence quoting "occult influence" in the criminal history of the world. Doctor Wickland's account of Thaw's victim speaking to him. What he revealed. Another "etheric voice" or spirit takes control. What this "voice" also told the doctor. Thaw was made the instrument of vengeance. Police are informed and a rigid investigation made. Their results save Thaw from the electric chair.

STAMFORD WHITE, American multi-millionaire, was murdered by another member of that exclusive circle, Harry K. Thaw, on a summer's night in 1906, in Madison Square Garden.

The world listened, as usual with eager interest, to the sensational revelations of life in high society. Thaw shot White because he suspected his beautiful wife, the famous Evelyn Nesbitt Thaw, of a liaison with him. The facts appeared quite simple, and there seemed no reason why Thaw should not go to the electric chair.

Able lawyers argued for Thaw's life, and in defence called world-famous alienists who proved to the satisfaction of the court that the accused man was insane, and judgment was entered accordingly. Few people noticed it at the time, but the trial of Harry K. Thaw was the first in criminal history in which a defence that the accused acted under occult influences was admitted. The usual outcry went up that Thaw's wealth had saved his life; but in spite of the charge of injustice alleged against American courts, this was an occasion on which the verdict and judgment were quite in accordance with the facts. Harry K. Thaw was not only mad at the time of the murder; he was in the grip of members of the spirit world who drove him to his dreadful deed.

The Thaw trial was forgotten when the great

American psychologist and humanitarian, Dr. Wickland, made his amazing statement that his wife had been in communication with the spirit of Harry Thaw's father at the time of the trial. The spirit begged the medium (Mrs. Wickland) to intercede for the life of his son, whom he claimed was psycho-sensitive and bewitched by spirits. I am not going to ask the reader to accept these facts unless he wishes, but I would point out that few of us are in a position to sneer at such a man as Dr. Wickland, whose life has been spent in the study and cure of mental obsessions. Probably no living man knows more about the world beyond or understands a hundredth part of what the great humanitarian has learned in his fight for the insane.

The spirit of Thaw senior seized Mrs. Wickland very suddenly, and before she knew it his voice was speaking through her to her husband. The voice gave incidents of young Thaw's childhood, which were afterwards substantiated by the most searching investigation. Bear in mind that the Wicklands knew only what they had seen in the newspapers, which never at any time gave the details communicated by the spirit-voice through Mrs. Wickland to her husband.

While the Thaw trial was actually in progress Mrs. Wickland found her body possessed by a spirit which loudly clamoured for whisky and soda. The voice was that of a man used to giving orders, brusque, and a trifle angry. Dr. Wickland questioned the spirit most carefully, and the substance of their conversation I record below :

DR. WICKLAND : " Where do you think you are ? "

THE VOICE : " Why, on the roof of Madison Square Garden, of course. Come on, you ; get me that whisky. "

DR. WICKLAND : " Who are you—what do you think you are ? "

THE VOICE : " I'm Stamford White, damn you ! Get me that whisky. "

DR. WICKLAND : " Why did Thaw kill you ? "

THE VOICE : " Thaw didn't kill me. There were a lot of them wanted to kill me. They made him do it, because I had stolen their daughters. "

DR. WICKLAND: "Thaw may go to the electric chair. Do you want him to die?"

At this the spirit became most violent, and Mrs. Wickland writhed on the floor. In great anguish, the voice begged Dr. Wickland to intercede for Thaw, and swore that he was not responsible for his death. White said that he bore animus against none, and that he believed the spirits had done rightly in avenging themselves on him.

The Wicklands continued their investigation of the strange affair, and a little later another spirit took possession of Mrs. Wickland, who is one of the most famous mediums in America. This time the spirit was that of a man who claimed that his daughter had been wronged by White, and that he had used Harry Thaw as the instrument through which he wreaked his vengeance. The story was a long and terrible one, and I shall leave the reader to judge as to its merits.

It must be remembered that the Wicklands scrupulously avoided enquiring into the lives of White and Thaw until such time as they had completed their psychic contacts. They were convinced that if they continued they would eventually learn the whole story of the White murder. They were not disappointed, as I shall show.

The spirit who now took possession of Mrs. Wickland was a semi-illiterate man of the lower middle classes. He told Dr. Wickland, in answer to carefully worded questions, that he had a very beautiful daughter who had met Stamford White in New York. White had found her employment and afterwards installed her in an apartment as his mistress. Later it became apparent that White had made many similar conquests, but few were fraught with the stark tragedy that edged this particular affair.

For a long time the girl was very happy, and although her parents begged her to return to them, she decided to live on as White's mistress, and enjoy the good things which he lavished upon her. Even the serious illness of her father could not bring her home, and for weeks she was in ignorance of his death. When she did learn

of it, she was naturally considerably upset, and from that day White's interest in her seemed to wane. He became less and less generous, and finally she was turned out on the streets, with the knowledge that she was shortly to become a mother. In a last desperate attempt to secure his pity, the unhappy woman went to White to tell him of her condition. She could not get past his manservants, and in utter despair committed suicide.

Some of us believe in vengeance after death ; others are sceptical. But the fact remains that in this case the father of the dead girl leagued himself with other spirits to bring about the death of White. One of his remarks, in answer to a question by Dr. Wickland, is illuminating.

"Yes," said the voice, "I wanted to kill him. The rich steal our daughters and shame them. We can do nothing on earth. The police protect the rich and help them to despoil our children. But we punished the rich. We made one rich man kill another."

Surely an astonishing conception of justice ! And yet how accurate it might easily have been ? Stamford White had all the advantages that wealth brings, and in America they are particularly pronounced. An irate father seeking to avenge his daughter would be arrested and perhaps receive a long sentence in prison through the political influence that such a man could wield. We know little as yet of the spirit world, but is it not conceivable that a father dying with the thought of his daughter's betrayal weighing heavily on his soul should not seek in after-life to perpetrate some act of revenge ? Note, too, how the spirit regarded it as essential that a rich man should kill White. One can follow the workings of a mind that believed the rich to be inviolate, save at the hands of their equals.

I have had some interesting discussions with famous spiritualists, but no story has thrilled me more than that of a well-known man who was present when a high official of the Metropolitan Police sought spirit aid in seeking a murderer. I know that this was not the first time that such an application was made, but

I should stress the point that such visits have always been unofficial. The officer concerned I knew well, and I had always regarded him as a materialist of materialists. What I did not know was that following the death of his beloved son in the Great War, his wife had been in constant touch with the spiritualist movement, and that her enthusiasm had communicated itself to her husband. He was convinced that on a number of occasions he had communicated with his son, and when he was faced with the solution of a terrible murder, he sought spiritualistic aid.

The gentleman who retailed the story to me said that the medium when approached was frankly doubtful that any tangible result could be achieved. She gave an astonishing reason for her conviction. In the spirit world, she said, vengeance was a shameful thing, and for that reason her friends on the other side of the veil would be unlikely to give information to the authorities. However, considering the nature of the crime, and the fact that it might well be the forerunner of others of a similar nature, she determined to make the attempt.

A long séance ensued, and finally the spirit of a famous author appeared to speak to the two men through the medium. I should make it quite clear here that, though it is necessary to suppress the names of all concerned, the spirit in question was not that of our most famous spiritualist, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. I make this statement because I know how anxious are the relatives of the great novelist to test the evidence of any medium who claims to have communicated with Sir Arthur, and I would not like them to think that he played any part in this strange affair.

The voice was indignant when told the object of the séance, and it was only with great persuasion that the questioner got the spirit to stay. In angry tones, the voice said that practically everyone in the spirit world was not only opposed to vengeance, but that murdered people were only too anxious to forgive their slayers. It went on to say that the victim of the crime which the officer had investigated knew her murderer, but

that she did not want to see him die. She felt sure that he would not commit a similar crime again. In fact, the voice went on, her only concern was that the murderer should not worry too much about his offence. She hated to think that, while she was so happy in the spirit world, he should be tortured by conscience on earth.

You may think that this story rather contradicts Dr. Wickland's statements with regard to Stamford White. I do not think so. It is a reasonable presumption that the spirit world is divided into good and evil, just as is this earth of ours, and this is one of the principal claims of spiritualists. The spirits which gained possession of Harry Thaw and hounded White to his death were evil spirits, and spiritualists are very definite on this point. There are many cases in existence where evil spirits have taken control of a person to his or her undoing, but in others spiritualists when consulted in time have managed to exorcize the evil one, and the earthly victim has suffered no further.

My friend whispered to the questioner to ask the spirit whether it was not a fact that spirits had vouchsafed information to the police of other countries. At this the medium struggled violently and the voice, in great agitation, shouted :

"Do not believe them—they are making of you murderers just like themselves. Only the evil spirits will tell you these things, and always they lie. They like to slay the innocent."

The officer knew nothing of spiritualist's beliefs, but he afterwards learned that for many years this has been the impression among mediums. Many attempts have been made in continental countries to get in touch with spirits for detection purposes, and sometimes the results have led to arrest and punishment. The problem of the evil spirit maliciously directing the police wrongly gives me deeply to think. I know that for a long time the German police have unofficially sought psychic aid in unravelling crimes, and it is a reasonable assumption that some suspects have been found guilty and punished on information supplied through

the spirit medium. As an ex-detective I know how very easy it is for an innocent man to become enmeshed in the net of circumstantial evidence. For instance, assume that your home is some distance from the Tube station, and that you are returning home late one night along a deserted road. You pass one or two people, who take no notice of you, and eventually you reach home. Next morning you learn that the body of a child has been found in the area of a house in one of the streets you have passed down. You are arrested. How unpleasant it would be for you if two independent witnesses swore to seeing you apparently hurrying away from the scene of the crime! Of course more proof than this would be required to establish your guilt, but nevertheless it might easily be that you had no wish to explain your movements on the night in question. Let us assume, then, that a police official receives spirit information which leads him to suspect a man who cannot give a satisfactory account of his whereabouts on the night of the crime. This might make things exceedingly awkward for the man, even if it did no more than lay him under suspicion. Such a possibility as this dissuades many spiritualists from attempting to aid the police in the detection of crime.

CHAPTER XV

Who was Detroit's "Dark Age Killer"? "To-night these six shall die."

With these words flashing through his evil mind as motive. A family were wiped out in a few minutes. Who was the phantom swordsman who killed Beniamino Evangelista—strange personality. Among other things a voodoo doctor and student of the occult. What did this have to do with the wholesale sword slaughter—every victim's head being severed from his body? Did evil "etheric spirits" also kill Santina his wife, Angeline aged eight, Jenny aged three, Morrie aged eighteen months. Who was, or were, the satanic "forces" who harked back to the Dark Ages—committing a series of murders Detroit will never forget?

THIS true account of *Crime and the Supernatural* which occurred in the United States of America bears in every way the revolting hall-mark of that dark unnatural cult known as black magic. Without fear of contradiction, it can be considered one of the most frightful and mysterious crimes ever perpetrated in modern times.

For the source and knowledge of the facts I am deeply indebted to Mr. Ralph Goll, of the *Detroit Times*, as well as for authority to quote the story of Mr. John Shuttleworth, the experienced editor of that world-known Macfadden publication, the *True Detective Magazine*, Broadway, New York City.

Due to the courtesy of both these American gentlemen my sincere thanks are tendered in permitting me to relate for the first time in this country the awful atrocities of Detroit's "Dark Age Killer."

Toward midnight of July 2nd, 1929, a cool breeze swept down from the upper lakes region into Detroit.

In the outlying sections of the city thousands who had remained outdoors longer than was their wont, seeking relief from the heat by driving and walking or sitting on stoops and porches, now turned refreshed toward their homes and beds. Traffic diminished rapidly. Soon only an occasional pedestrian or car

was to be seen. Everywhere curtains were drawn and lights blinked out.

At the corner of St. Aubin and Mack Avenues, in the heart of "Little Italy," all was quiet when the patrolman on the beat made his twelve o'clock report to the Hunt Street Station.

Dominic Diapolo, proprietor of a delicatessen which always remained open longer than any other business place in the neighbourhood, had closed his doors and was preparing to retire to his sleeping quarters in the rear of the store. With one exception the nearby houses were dark.

In a first-floor room at 3587 St. Aubin Avenue—a dwelling adjoining Diapolo's shop—lights still burned. The merchant noticed them.

"My neighbour is keeping late hours again," Diapolo reflected, calling to mind some of the fantastic tales he had heard about Beniamino Evangelista, owner of the house next door. Evangelista, known also as Benny Evangelist, had long been an enigma to the storekeeper.

It was, of course, common knowledge that the occupant of the lighted room at 3587 had been born in Casino, a village in the Neapolitan area of Italy where such mediæval superstitions as "the evil eye" still linger. Many of Evangelista's neighbours, Diapolo, the merchant, included, had known him as a boy, and, like him, had emigrated to the United States a few years before the World War.

Evangelista had first settled in rural Pennsylvania not far from York and Lancaster. In the light of events that followed, this circumstance is significant. In the hills around York there is a strangely backward people whose mode of life has not changed greatly from that of their pre-Revolutionary forefathers.

On lonely farms, up remote valleys, in obscure villages shut in by the rugged hills and protected by rough, steep roads from the incursions of their neighbours, these people live, work, and think in a manner long ago outgrown in modern communities.

Here there exist faiths apparently compounded out of the mysticism of the Dark Ages and the bizarre voodoo rites of Africa. Wild incantations, cryptic formulæ and midnight terror appear in the practices of the devotees. The priests are witch doctors. During the last decade several horrible crimes committed in this desolate region have been definitely linked with voodooism.

How long the Italian immigrant, Evangelista, remained in Pennsylvania is not known. His fellow-countrymen who still live in the vicinity of York placed the time of his arrival as some time in 1912. They called him "Benny the Preach." But none was much impressed by him and when he wandered away his absence was scarcely noted.

Evangelista appeared in Detroit in 1914. He was then twenty-eight years old; a sturdy man, with a firm chin and penetrating eyes. He had now mastered the English language. Obtaining work as a carpenter and plumber, he applied himself to his jobs with such diligence that he prospered and soon became well known in the community.

Italians with whom Evangelista was associated in the months immediately following his arrival in Detroit noticed nothing unusual in his character. They were a little surprised later when the carpenter-plumber suddenly began revealing himself as a prophet and faith healer. At times Evangelista would drop his tools and pray fervently. Then it happened that one of his fellow-workers accidentally slashed his wrist. *Evangelista stopped the flow of blood by touching the wound and saying a few words, it was related.*

Diapolo, the merchant, heard the story of Evangelista's "miracle." He was a practical man and he remained sceptical even later when Mrs. Daniel Vetrano, who lived at 3579 St. Aubin Avenue, the house just beyond Evangelista's, put down her market basket and whispered over the counter that the professed faith healer had cured her ailing baby.

"Little Michael was very sick," Mrs. Vetrano told

the store-keeper. "Someone told me to take him to Beniamino and I did. Beniamino read something from a book. What it was I do not know, for the language was neither English nor Italian. He made signs and after that he sat for a long time with his eyes closed. Finally he seemed to wake up. He told us to go home—that my baby would be well again. Right away little Michael got better."

Diapolo tapped his head. "I think Beniamino is crazy. He is too much alone. He should get married."

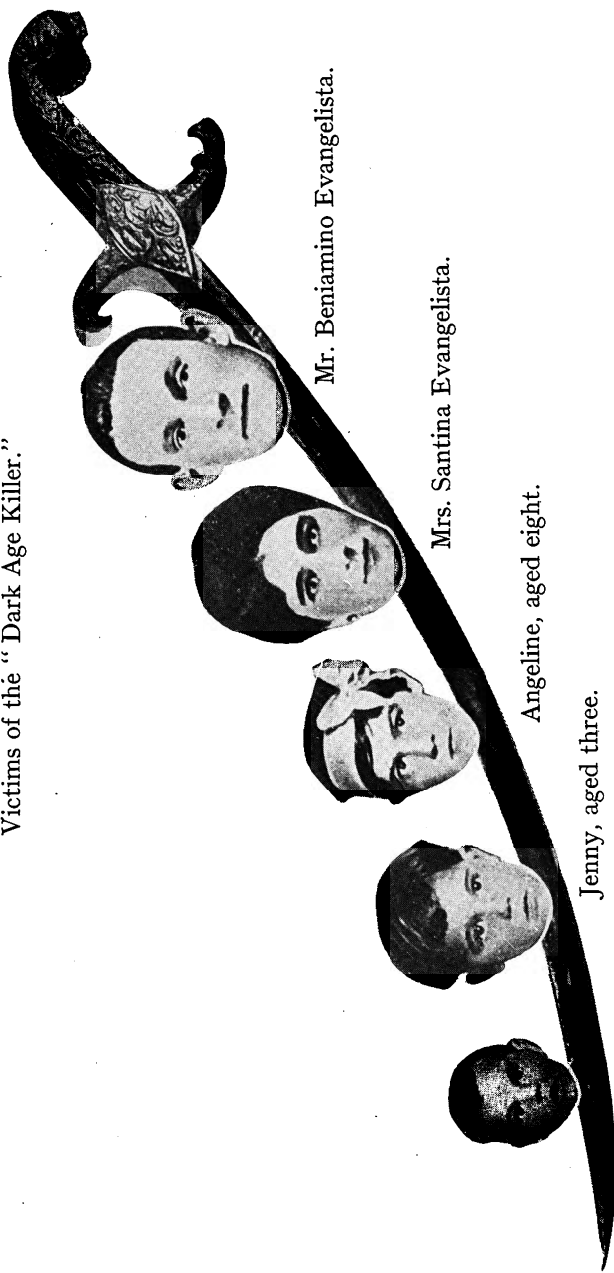
So the months and years passed, each day bringing the house-wives of the neighbourhood to Diapolo's store with their baskets and their gossip. Often there was talk of Evangelista. Curious eyes were kept on his house. So it happened there were many who saw the young woman, Santina, borne to Evangelista's door on a stretcher. There was much conjecture.

Mrs. Bernard Saurine, who lived at 2135 Wilkins Avenue, and was friendly with both the stricken woman and the reputed miracle man, witnessed what followed. In due time Diapolo had the story from her.

"Santina comes from a wealthy family in the old country," said Mrs. Saurine. "She was a very smart girl, but she studied too hard and her health began to fail her. So her father sent her to this country. She got worse and no one expected her to live when she was married to Beniamino. 'I can cure this woman, but she must marry me,' Evangelista told us. Santina consented, and they were married immediately, though the woman was unable to get out of bed. Santina's health began to improve at once."

A strange happening, if true; stranger even than the tales of witchery that used to be told in peasant hovels when knights still rode. Diapolo began to wonder whether there might not be some foundation for the stories of his neighbour's uncanny powers. Certainly, Santina, now Evangelista's wife, had regained her health. She came often to the store. She was an attractive woman with the olive complexion and dark

The Evangelista family.
Victims of the "Dark Age Killer."



Mr. Beniamino Evangelista.

Mrs. Santina Evangelista.

Angeline, aged eight.

Jenny, aged three.

Morrio, aged eighteen months.

eyes of her race. Diapolo gathered that she was as much a devotee of the occult as her husband.

"It is not well that a man should meddle in matters not of this world," the merchant philosophized. "But neither is it well to meddle in a neighbour's affairs."

Children were born to the Evangelistas. Angeline was now eight years old; Matilda, five; Jenny, three; and Morrio, eighteen months. There would soon be another baby if Mrs. Vetrano was to be believed.

Evangelista became financially independent, if not actually wealthy. Some of his business deals were a little shady and once he was taken into Recorder's Court on a charge of violating the city plumbing ordinance. He had recently sold a carpentry shop at 3459 St. Aubin Avenue, a block from his home.

He began devoting all his time to weird religious rites and practices. His fame as a healer had penetrated outside the city. His patients and followers included both Americans and Italians. The mystic kept no regular office hours. He was likely to be found any night in his study. Once or twice each week he held séances. Occasionally he brewed mysterious potions from herbs grown in a garden behind his house. Sometimes, as he expressed it, he communed with the moon, stars, wind and the spirits of the dead.

Mrs. Evangelista was in the habit of sharing her husband's nightly vigils and studies. Both professed to be Christians, but Father Francis Beccherini, Pastor of the San Francisco Church, in whose parish they lived, was unable to persuade them to abandon their occult practices, even though he tried hard to do so.

Conversing with Diapolo, Father Beccherini said he believed the Evangelistas were both mad. He considered Santina the more deranged of the two. Nevertheless, the couple's children were highly intelligent and much loved by their school-teachers and others who came in contact with them.

"It is sad," said Father Beccherini, "that a couple so blessed in many ways should also be cursed."

Thus it was that this midnight, as Diapolo meditatively covered a jar of pickles and returned a cheese to its place in the show case, lights burned in the room where little Michael Vetrano had been "cured" and the "miracle" of Santina's restoration to health had been worked.

Evangelista himself was seated at a desk in the chamber reading. Before him lay a pile of manuscripts and copies of a "Bible" he had written. These paper-bound books bore the title: *The Oldest History of the World, Revealed by Occult Science*. In one end of the room was an altar. Elsewhere were ranged ponderous volumes, astrological charts, phials and retorts—in fine, all the paraphernalia one might expect to find in an alchemist's crypt.

To-night Mrs. Evangelista had accompanied the children to upstairs bedrooms and had retired with them, owing, no doubt, to her delicate condition. Now the voodoo doctor alone was awake.

His study opened on a porch which in turn fronted the street. The outside door was closed, but not locked. Evangelista's back was toward the door. At his side was one of the chairs to which he usually directed visitors. Obviously, he had had a caller or was expecting one soon.

Outdoors there was a sudden clatter. The rising wind had blown the top off a garbage container in the alley between Evangelista's house and Diapolo's store. The mystic was not disturbed. Diapolo, hearing the noise as he composed himself for sleep, felt grateful for the roof over his head, and, sighing comfortably, slipped at once into a deep slumber.

Across the street a woman, whose name has never been revealed, glanced out of her bedroom window. She noted the fantastic shadows wrought by the trees as the wind tossed their branches under the street lamps. The light in the voodoo doctor's study drew her eyes.

Near the porch outside Evangelista's door she perceived a shadow closely resembling a man. Perhaps it was only the effect of wind, trees and lamps. The

woman could not be sure. One thing was certain, however. The dim figure was short, only a little over five feet from top to bottom, in fact. The head, if head it was, scarcely reached the level of the porch railing.

The witness was only casually interested in the shadow. Without giving the matter further thought she turned her face from the window and presently she, too, slept.

At 11.30 a.m. the following day, Vincent Elias, a real estate broker, of 2324 Glendale Avenue, and a close friend of Evangelista, called at the voodoo doctor's home. Three huge mastiffs, chained in the back-yard, barked as he put foot on the porch.

When his knocks went unanswered, Elias tried the door to Evangelista's study and found it unlatched. He threw it open, calling a cheery greeting. Then he started back in horror and his voice rose to a scream.

The mystic's library was a veritable abattoir, drenched its length with blood. The caller's glance of horror went from the reddened rugs to the thing that had once been the voodoo doctor. Headless, it sat slumped forward against the table. Beside it on the floor lay the head with contorted features upturned.

With incoherent cries and wild gesticulations Elias fled from the grisly chamber to Diapolo's store. There he found a telephone and with difficulty called the Police Department and told what he had seen.

Patrolmen Alex Costage and Kennedy Lawrence, minute men of the Hunt Street Station, responded to the alarm. With the trembling real estate broker leading them they entered the house of death.

"This man—did he have a family?" Patrolman Costage asked as he turned sickened from the sight of the beheaded Evangelista.

"Oh, Mother of God, yes," cried Elias, wringing his hands. "How could I have forgotten? A wife and four babies."

"And they slept upstairs?" the officer wanted to know.

Elias nodded and indicated the stairway. Bloody footprints leading from the pool of gore around Evangelista's corpse to the stairs confirmed his worst fears. The murderer had mounted to the bedrooms.

Hesitantly the policemen followed the crimson trail to the second floor. The door of Mrs. Evangelista's sleeping quarters stood open. Patrolman Lawrence peered inside and caught his fellow officer's sleeve.

"Don't look," he whispered hoarsely, "the wife and a baby . . ."

Mrs. Evangelista and her infant son, Morrio, had been, chopped to death as they slept. Like the faith healer they had been decapitated.

At the end of the hall, in a rear bedroom, an even ghastlier sight awaited the three men. The door of the room was ajar. A nauseating smell of blood came out. Lawrence looked inside. Costage looked. Elias kept his eyes closed.

On one of two beds lay five-year-old Matilda Evangelista, completely disembowelled. Her sister, Jenny, had been slain in a similar manner. At the foot of the other bed was the mutilated and naked body of Angeline, the eldest child. One of the girl's arms had been severed at the shoulder. There was a deep gash in her neck.

Dazed, the exploring party retreated to the first floor. While Costage stood guard at the front door Lawrence got Central Station by 'phone.

Within a few minutes Evangelista's house and yard swarmed with uniformed and plain-clothes police. Edward Fox, then Chief of Detectives of the Detroit Police Department, took personal charge. Just as the murders had been the most gruesome Detroit had ever known, so now was launched the greatest man-hunt in the city's history.

Starting in the voodoo doctor's study, picked men from the Homicide and Black Hand squads went over every inch of floor and wall in the house, scrutinizing each object as they came to it. Startling discoveries were made almost momentarily.

One of the investigators, descending to the cellar,

came upon a room such as none would suppose existed outside the fiction of Poe. All natural light was shut from this vault-like recess by heavy green curtains. Brushing aside the draperies, the officer touched the button of his flashlight. Something that leapt into visibility in the beam of his lamp made him reach instinctively for his pistol. He did not draw, however. After his first startled glimpse of the occupants of the chamber, he knew they did not live, though they appeared to move. Gun-fighter that he was, he would have preferred facing things of flesh and bone rather than the objects he now confronted.

From every corner devil faces leered at him.

At the front, roped away from a row of chairs like figures in a wax museum, were seven grotesque images each suspended from the ceiling. The bodies of the effigies were horrible mockeries of human forms, the faces were masques more frightful than those worn by tragedians in ancient days. With every current of air the monstrosities swayed like shrivelled dead men on a gallows.

The detective, an Irishman, crossed himself and hastened to inform Chief Fox of his discovery. Meanwhile Bertillon experts had found prints of a bloody hand on the walls of the stairs. The prints were badly smudged and dried, but some of the whorls could still be traced.

Measuring the height of the prints above the steps and the length and width of the tracks left by the murderer's blood-soaked shoes, the identification men deduced that the slayer had abnormally small feet and was little over five feet tall. His shoes, they said, were size five and one-half.

Other detectives, examining the corpses, added something else to the probable physical characteristics of the slayer. They declared he was a man of more than ordinary strength, despite his small feet and slight stature. They based their theory on the discovery that Evangelista's head had been severed by a single blow.

A search of the house and every possible place in the

neighbourhood where the murderer's weapon might have been discarded or hidden revealed nothing. It was at first supposed by the detectives that the slayer had used an axe, hatchet, or some kind of sharp butcher's cleaver.

But Doctor Paul A. Klebba, medical examiner, announced as soon as he had viewed the bodies that the wounds were not inflicted with an axe or any similar instrument. Doctor Klebba and Frank Gutch, the latter a detective, made careful measurements and diagrams of the wounds.

These studies indicated the murderer had employed a heavy instrument with a cutting edge more than a foot in length. The medical examiner said *a bolo, scimitar, cavalry sabre, or machete were the only cutting weapons that corresponded with the nature of the mutilations.*

So now the word went out to find a swordsman, short and probably stocky, with effeminate feet and small muscular fingers.

Although Evangelista's neighbours were closely questioned, none could recall having seen a man of such physique in the faith healer's company. This fact the detectives found disconcerting, for they had counted on an almost immediate identification of the sword murderer.

It seemed logical to suppose that the slayer had been friendly with the voodoo doctor. None of the residents of the vicinity had heard Evangelista's dogs during the night, a circumstance indicating they knew the man who had butchered the family.

Diapolo, the merchant, had not been disturbed after the wind knocked off his garbage can. The woman who lived across the street said she had heard nothing unusual.

"I heard the garbage can rattling," she related. "At first I supposed a cat or dog had gotten into it. Then I looked out the window and saw the wind was rising. There was a light in Evangelista's study. I didn't think much about it, for I knew he kept unholy hours. Then it was that I got a glimpse of a shadow

on the lawn beside his porch. It appeared to be the shadow of a small man or boy," the woman concluded.

Detectives accompanied the woman to her bedroom and from the window viewed the front of Evangelista's house. Through additional questioning of the witness and by measurements they decided the dim figure she had seen corresponded in size with the murderer. Evidently the woman had seen the fiendish swordsman just before he enacted his crimes. She had not noticed whether there was a car parked near the house.

As the police now pictured the night's happenings, the murderer had an appointment with the voodoo doctor or was well acquainted with him and his household. Entering the study without making his presence known, the killer had found the occultist in a trance or deeply buried in a book. Whipping out his keen-edged weapon, he had directed a mighty blow at the neck of the bowed figure, inflicting instant death. Then he had mounted the stairs, touching nothing except the walls as he moved to complete his devilish mission.

Swiftly and silently he had put Mrs. Evangelista and her baby to the sword. Matilda and Jenny were the next victims. Angeline, waking, had been cut down as she fled from her bed, probably before she could make an outcry. Then the murderer, with clothes and weapon dripping blood, had descended to the study and street, methodically closing the door as he left.

This much established, there arose a more or less heated discussion among the investigators over the motive for the butchery of the voodoo doctor and his family. Possible causes were checked and eliminated until it only remained for the police to decide whether the crimes were committed by a religious maniac, a black-hander or a man who believed he had been wronged by Evangelista.

Evidence was uncovered which seemed at first to make any one of the three motives probable. Detective Max Waldfogel found among the mystic's possessions a photograph of a child lying in a casket, a pretty girl

who was between four and six years of age when she died. The theory was advanced that the professed faith healer had been murdered with his wife and children because he failed to cure a child brought to him by ignorant parents.

Detectives were dispatched to St. Louis to search for a man whose child had died after being treated by Evangelista. They returned shortly with the report that their assignment had developed nothing. Simultaneously friends of Evangelista identified the photograph as that of one of his own children whom his strange rites had failed to save from death.

Lingerie and woman's night gowns found in a drawer of the table in the mystic study were regarded as being specially significant. Police who held to the jealousy-revenge motive drew the conclusion that through his occult religious practices Evangelista had betrayed women followers and patients. They pictured his basement sanctuary with its hellish idols as the scene of repeated orgies during which the cult leader debauched the female converts. His pretensions to ability as a faith healer might have served to cloak the obscene revelries of phallic or devil-worship, they said.

This theory collapsed when it was learned that Evangelista required his clients and patients to provide him with some garment worn next to the skin when he prayed them back to health or traced missing persons through visions.

Every letter, manuscript, and book in the mystic's house was taken to police headquarters where details of experts spent days reading the contents. These studies brought to light three letters demanding money from the voodoo doctor and threatening his life. The extortionist notes had been received by Evangelista at intervals during 1928.

One missive read :

"This is your last chance—The Vendetta."

Under this was a crudely drawn axe.

Another letter, written by Louis Evangelista, a cousin of the murdered man, was found among the papers. Apparently it had been delivered just a few

hours before the family was slaughtered. The police did not regard it as being particularly significant until in checking through their files they learned that now a section foreman living in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania, he had fled from Detroit in 1926 after killing a black-hander who attempted to extort \$5,000 from his father-in-law, Angelo Papraro.

Forthwith, two officers went to Coraopolis. They had an all-night conference with the cousin, but learned nothing that seemed to have any connection with the murders. Louis described in detail how he had killed Felice Argento when the latter called at his father-in-law's house for the extortion money. He said the voodoo doctor had taken no part in the plot to frustrate the black-handers and could not logically have been a victim of revenge.

Ignace Capizzi, assistant prosecuting attorney, entered the case, running down several clues that seemed to place the Evangelista murders in a category with black-hand crimes. He conferred with Father Beccherini, the parish priest, who had received threatening letters. The handwriting in the notes received by the priest was not that of the man who had threatened the voodoo doctor.

Veterans of the black-hand squad shook their heads sceptically.

"It isn't like Italian extortionists to butcher an entire family," they said. "We must look elsewhere for the motive."

Another field fertile with clues and conjectures was opened when Inspector Fred Frahm, at that time head of the homicide squad, got to work on the religious angle of the case. The contents of Evangelista's "Bible" interested him greatly.

The Oldest History of the World was without doubt one of the strangest books ever written. It was in part childish. Some of the sentences were ungrammatical and incoherent. Yet there was about the work, as a whole, something of the exalted madness of John of Patmos. One might say it was apocalyptic.

"So they formed a coach of clouds with the strength

of the wind and air," wrote the inspired madman. "After ninety days they opened the coach and in it found a phenomenon in the aspect of a human being. It had arms but no legs, two wings on its arms and one on its back and a blonde beard ; and it was seven times the size of a man. The winds named him God and gave him their strength."

Further, in the *Oldest History* appeared such statements as these :

"In Nile the strongest man became king. They wrestled and the winner became king. . . . In Caion the man who had the longest beard became king. . . . In Aliel the greatest talker was made queen. . . ."

More interesting, in view of the ghastly fate that had overtaken the author and his family, were references to the butchery of humans and cannibalism :

"If any Caion men would acquaint themselves with Caion or Aliel women they would be cut to pieces and fed to the slaves. . . ."

"Berland began to run away from him, but the blood came out of her shoulder so her power was broken ; she cannot magnetize the people anymore."

What was the significance of these blood-curdling tales, detectives asked themselves. Why had the Evangelista family been "cut to pieces ?" Why had little Angeline's arm been severed at the shoulder ?

"Go out and find the man who printed this book," Inspector Frahm directed his men. "Also learn who made the *papier mâché* figures Evangelista had in his cellar."

The homicide and black-hand squads had now been combined and the cream of the detective bureau was working on the case. All the resources of the department were placed at their disposal.

Note-books in hand, sixty headquarters men invaded the neighbourhood of the Evangelista home and interviewed the tenants of every house for blocks around. "Little Italy," usually taciturn so far as police investigations are concerned, had been shocked into loquacity by the frightfulness of the murders.

Scores of demented men were taken into custody. Occultists and religious fanatics of every kind were brought in for investigation. Owners of mediæval weapons were questioned. Museums and private collections of ancient and modern arms were visited.

The *Detroit Times* offered a \$5,000 reward for exclusive information leading to the capture of the slayer. An additional \$1,000 reward was posted by Wayne County police departments, and law-enforcement agencies throughout the world were circularized.

Then the identity of the publisher of the *Oldest History* was established. He was Francis Slunder, a Belgian free-lance printer, of 3652 Meldrum Avenue.

"Evangelista came to me in 1926 with the manuscript of his book," Slunder related. "I agreed to print it for him. He only came to my shop two or three times and was always alone."

Disappointed, the detectives redoubled their efforts to find the artist who had created the idols in Evangelista's cellar chapel. Soon they learned the grotesque figures had been fabricated by Fortuna J. Martin, foreman of the Johnson Flag and Decorating Company, 3529 Gratiot Avenue.

Evangelista, Martin said, presented rough pencil sketches of his images and ordered them made "as horrible as possible." According to Martin, the voodoo doctor meant to use the images in a lecture tour and in a motion picture he contemplated making.

"Evangelista appeared calm and sane when he talked of any subject except his religion," said Martin. "Then he would gesture and jump around like a man possessed. He seemed absolutely sincere in his beliefs."

The detectives had again drawn a blank.

A rumour reached the police that the voodoo had maintained a second chapel or church somewhere in the city. Determined efforts to find the mysterious shrine were made, but its location was not learned. Neither did the investigators find anyone who would admit being a follower of the occultist.

In despair the detectives turned to clairvoyants and

psychologists—sources of help they would have scorned in any other case. Acting on the assumption that there was just a chance that mediums might be able to establish the identity of the murderer, grimly practical detective lieutenants and sergeants consulted with spiritualists. They learned nothing they did not already know.

Professor John B. Waite, of the University of Michigan law school faculty, and one of the nation's foremost criminologists, was asked to aid in the search. He advised the police not to work entirely on the theory the murderer was a maniac.

"The slayer is not necessarily insane, though his crime appears to be the work of a maniac," Professor Waite said. "Of course, he is abnormal mentally, but no one can say in just what way. It is impossible, I hold, to judge the type of man who performs a crime by the nature of his deeds and manner in which he enacts them."

Anthony Evangelista, a brother of the voodoo doctor, appeared at the house some time after the murder and was questioned, but could not throw any light on the many puzzling points in the case.

"I hadn't seen Beniamino for months," Anthony said. "We weren't what you would call good friends. I didn't approve of his crazy religious ideas."

Benito Abruzze, a cement contractor, was grilled after word reached the police that he had once accused the murdered faith healer of sending him a black-hand letter. Abruzze, who had been a friend of Evangelista when both were boys in Italy, denied he had ever said the voodoo doctor wrote the letter. He admitted an attempt had been made to extort money from him.

A huge banana knife found in the possession of Angelo Depoli, thirty-four, of 2630 Pierce Street, led to his arrest. Depoli was released after detectives found the knife could not have been used in committing the murders.

Other suspects were given their liberty. The failure of the police to find the sword slayer gave rise to wild

tales in "Little Italy." There was talk of a pact with Satan which Evangelista was said to have made. One heard whispers of blood-drinking vampires and wer-wolves.

In other quarters a campaign to drive all spiritualists and fortune tellers from the city was launched. James E. Chenot, Prosecuting Attorney, had scores of seers arrested, but the drive collapsed after it was revealed that detectives of the homicide squad had been consulting the mystics.

CHAPTER XVI

The Evangelista murders constitute one of the most unusual psychic cases police were ever called on to handle ANYWHERE. Not only were the murders singularly frightful—but there was an element about them that removed them from the modern world. The strange "psychic" practices of the man—his claims and religious factors, also the murdering weapons were so unusual that the crimes stand alone as supernatural.

TWO weeks after Evangelista and his family had been buried from San Francisco's Church with rites which attracted thousands, the police were informed that a short, stocky Italian had moved into the neighbourhood of St. Aubin and Mack Avenues shortly before the crimes. No one seemed to know just where he lived or what his name was. It was supposed he had a wife and daughter. Rumours were afloat that while this man had not visited Evangelista previous to the murders, he had once been closely associated with the faith healer. Indeed, there were some who declared he had collaborated with Evangelista in writing *The Oldest History of the World*.

This man, according to gossipers in "Little Italy" had vanished the day after the murders.

Vainly the police sought this mysterious figure. Nothing more definite was learned about him. He remained as vague as the shadow seen on the voodoo doctor's lawn.

At a conference, during which all the developments in the case were discussed and all angles checked, Inspector Frahm and Chief of Detectives Fox agreed that two avenues of investigation remained open—Evangelista's early life and associations, and any "chopper" murders which may have antedated the crimes in St. Aubin Avenue.

Enquiries along these lines continued for a year, eventually resulting in a midnight exhumation of

Evangelista's body. Strangely enough, in their first excited efforts to capture the sword killer police had overlooked the possibility that the voodoo doctor himself might have been a murderer and thus had neglected to take his finger-prints.

So another weird chapter was written in the strangest of murders. Four men were present when the occultist's corpse was disinterred—Ward Culver, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, a sexton, a detective, and a finger-print expert. Prints of the decomposing fingers were taken. They were not good—they could not have been. By an odd coincidence, the removal of the body took place almost on the first anniversary of the murders.

Was the voodoo doctor literally pointing out from his grave with fleshless fingers the murderer?

The graveyard episode occurred after a hint, coming down those invisible wires the police had strung around the world from Evangelista's former home in the Pennsylvania hills, reached the detective bureau. The suggestion was of uncertain origin, but it implied the voodoo doctor had been connected with a ten-year-old "hex" butchery in Lancaster.

Two aces of the homicide squad were dispatched immediately to Eastern Pennsylvania. They were Sergeant Tom Dwyer and Detective Roy Pendergrass. They established headquarters in York.

Shortly they learned that Aurelius Angelino, an escaped lunatic, had hacked two of his children to death in his home in Lancaster in 1919. Angelino, born in Italy in 1884, had come to the United States in 1912 with his wife, Freda, and a son, Aurelius, junior. After their immigration three more children were born, a daughter and twin sons.

Angelino and his family first appeared in the "voodoo district" of Pennsylvania in 1914. Early in 1919 he went insane and on February 10th of that year he was confined in the Lancaster Insane Asylum. On May 17th, 1919, his wife obtained his release, pretending she was going to take him back to Italy.

The following day two milk cans bearing the sign "For Sale" appeared on Angelino's lawn. They contained the mangled bodies of the twin boys.

Angelino, surrendering to the police without resistance, claimed he found the children dead. He was committed to the Fairview Criminal Insane Asylum. Displaying great cunning, he escaped from the institution July 16th, 1920, blackened his face and hands, and, posing as a Negro, escaped detection until a month later when he was captured and returned to the asylum. He escaped again September 23rd, 1923, and was not again taken in custody.

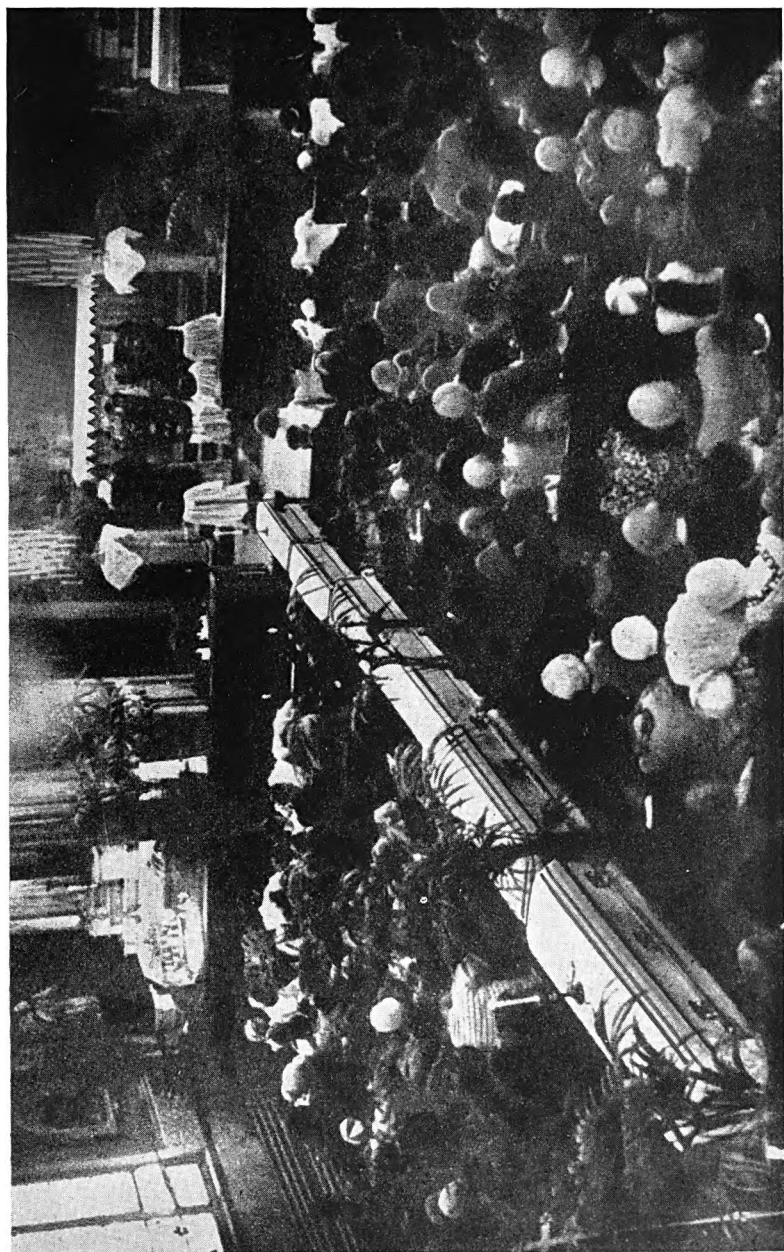
Three startling theories were developed by the detectives :

1. *That Evangelista and Angelino were the same man.*
2. *That Evangelista slew the Angelino twins and was butchered with his family in reprisal.*
3. *That Evangelista, innocent of slaying the twins, was put to death by the escaped maniac. Angelino, because of some injury in the past or through some quirk of religious fanaticism.*

Striving to discover some connection between the Detroit voodoo doctor and the madman of the hills, the detectives learned both men had come from the same village in Italy. They were about the same age and came to America the same year. Both were section hands on the Pennsylvania Railroad, working on lines that run through the hills from Philadelphia to York. Both lived in the vicinity at the same time and had similar religious delusions.

Angelino was a man of great strength and generally answered the description of the murderer built up by the Bertillon experts. He also resembled Evangelista.

The voodoo doctor and the maniac, if they had separate identities, must have known each other, the detectives declared. Both may have been high priests of the same cult of blood, they said. Upon this premise their built their fourth theory that a member of the cult, moved by Abrahamic insanity, had perpetrated the child murders for which Angelino was sent to the



Funeral service held in San Francisco's Church. Note the six silver-coloured coffins of the victims of Detroit's "Dark Age Killer."

asylum and had later hunted down and offered up as sacrifices the lives of Evangelista, his wife and children.

Subsequent investigations exploded many of their theories. Lancaster authorities announced that Angelino had been killed in a railroad yard by a train in 1926, three years after his escape from Fairview. Three Italians, friends of Mrs. Angelino, looked at the corpse after it had lain in the morgue unidentified for weeks and swore it was that of the escaped madman. A little later Mrs. Angelino, who had been desirous of marrying again, appealed to the courts to have Angelino pronounced legally dead. Her friends testified for her and Angelino's death became a matter of record. She remarried immediately.

The Lancaster authorities failed to finger-print Angelino after he was taken in custody for the murder of his twin sons. Neither did they obtain the finger-prints of the man killed in the railroad yards.

Angelino's former wife was shown a photograph of Evangelista.

"That man is not Angelino," she said. "I never saw him in my life."

Sergeant Dwyer and Detective Pendergrass were not convinced that Angelino had been killed, but discovered nothing tangible that would support any of their theories. From York and Lancaster the officers journeyed into the forbidding hills where Evangelista and Angelino had first come to believe in voodooism.

They stopped at lonely farms and labour camps along the Pennsylvania Railroad right-of-way, hoping always to meet someone who would be able to give them the key-clue to the jig-saw puzzle of murder and mania.

In Green Tree Hollow they found an ancient Italian who remembered Evangelista as "Benny the Preach." He pointed out a shack in which the then youthful section hand had dwelt alone with his books and fetiches. The intimate details of Evangelista's life had escaped the old man's memory. He was sure,

however, that the young emigrant had had no close friends. Of Angelino he had never heard.

Just beyond the next hill it seemed the investigators would come upon the vital fact. But every encouraging development was followed by a disappointment that outweighed it.

"Somewhere up here, there's an answer to the whole question," Detective Pendergrass told his partner.

But in the end they were compelled to abandon their quest, without reaching the solution. The rewards for the sword slayer still stand, and from time to time the case is revived and the search renewed. Recently a woman called the dog-licence bureau and enquired who had taken out licence number 23,039 in 1929. Joseph Dowd, record clerk, looked up the number and answered that the licence had been issued to Benny Evangelista for a black mongrel named Dick. The woman groaned and hung up her receiver without giving her name.

"The Evangelista murders constitute one of the most unique cases police were ever called on to handle anywhere," said Chief of Detectives, Fox. "Not only were the murders singularly frightful, but there was an element about them that removed them from the modern world. The religious factors and the murderer's weapon were in themselves so unusual that the crimes stand alone.

"Equally strange was the multitude of clues uncovered by our men. The leads were varied, directing suspicion toward divergent points. Yet almost any one of the clues was promising enough that, had we come upon it in an ordinary murder, we might have confidently expected to clear it up. *This is a case in which a murderer from the Dark Ages has baffled a thoroughly modernized police force; a case in which a swordsman has evaded capture, though every means known to criminological science was employed to detect him.*"

CHAPTER XVII

Hypnotic influence in crime. Where three men were murdered by a woman in France. In which there runs a strong element of this power of animal magnetism.

I AM devoting my next three chapters to hypnotism, for it is generally observed that whoever takes into account the phenomenon of one tributary of occultism—e.g. the power of inducing hypnosis—admits the inclusion of all the other tributaries of occultism for granted.

In regard to this domain, especially upon the Continent, and in particular France, hypnotism in crime as regards their criminal trials, is more readily accepted than in this country.

Mr. Nigel Trask, the Foreign Staff Correspondent of the same large American group of magazines to which I owe my account of Detroit's "Dark Age Killer," vividly relates the following gruesome story from France entitled "Three Dead Men—and the Lady with the Hypnotic Eyes," in which the strong element of hypnotism runs through its narration. Here is the true published story of the crime as related, and all its facts as revealed at the trial.

A gay party was in progress in the fashionable *salon* of the beautiful Hera Mirtel at 107 Rue de Sèvres, on the evening of May 5th, 1914. The large drawing-room of the exquisite lady's apartment was crowded with poets, painters, sculptors, musicians, professional beauties, those Bohemians from the Latin Quarter whom the hostess cultivated. Nothing suggested impending tragedy, yet one person in the house was already marked for death.

Hera Mirtel herself was the latest literary sensation of Paris. Her passionate love poems, plays and novels had made her celebrated, notorious. I have called her

beautiful, yet the adjective applied more to her vivid and disturbing personality than to her features. She was of medium height, dark, pale, with an alluringly rounded figure. The ivory pallor of her face was intensified by large, hypnotic blue eyes, so dark that they seemed black in the evening.

Everyone in that crowded drawing-room knew that behind Hera Mirtel's pseudonym was her true name of Marie-Louise Jacques, that she was married to a rich silk merchant twice her age, Paul Jacques, that he did not approve of her Bohemian friends and never attended her parties. At this very moment, in fact, the elderly husband was closeted in his study in the back part of the house. He was examining business papers, preparing to leave the following morning for Mexico, where he had extensive interests.

Hera Mirtel sat enthroned upon a high-backed chair of gold brocade, surveying her guests with a faint, secretive smile. At her side stood a handsome young poet, his bold eyes admiring her white throat, bosom, shoulders. Hera leaned toward him until one shoulder touched his coat sleeve. He quickly lowered his head, kissed the shoulder; Hera Mirtel laughed lightly. She was believed to have many lovers.

This glamorous lady was a person of contradictions, a writer of erotic literature, but also a crusading feminist. Her novels, her nine published plays, her books of verse, all stressed the romantic motive, yet she was the author of such solemn works as *The Legal Position of the Wife Throughout the World* and *Amazonism Throughout the Ages*.

It was two o'clock in the morning when the guests began to depart, three o'clock when the last group went downstairs. The young wife of Paul Jacques stood alone for a moment in the silent drawing-room, then turned, walked along a long hallway toward her bedroom. Passing her husband's study she saw a faint line of light under the door. So, he was still at work. She did not stop, but passed on to the room where her two daughters, girls of twelve and fourteen, were asleep.

In her own bedroom Madame Jacques disrobed, slipped into a filmy nightgown. She looked into a mirror, saw burning eyes, a white, hard, haggard face, scarcely like herself. Within three hours she must be up and dressed again to aid her husband in his start on his journey to Mexico. His boat train left shortly after seven in the morning.

Promptly at six a.m. Madame Jacques' maid awakened her and she hurriedly dressed. The two women gathered Monsieur Jacques' baggage together from the various parts of the apartment. Then Madame Jacques turned to the maid.

"It's almost six-thirty, Georgette," she whispered. "You'd better wake Monsieur. He has only time to dress and drink some coffee before leaving for the train."

"Yes, Madame," said Georgette, and walked down the hallway to rap upon Monsieur Jacques' bedroom door. When there was no answer she pushed the door open. A moment later she reappeared from the hallway, faced her mistress with terror-stricken eyes.

"Monsieur is not in the bedroom, his bed has not been slept in! But the door leading from his bedroom to his study is open and I looked in. He is sitting at his desk, but his face is down upon the desk. I saw blood!"

Madame Jacques seized the maid's wrist in a convulsive grip. "Come!" she whispered.

The two women entered Paul Jacques' bedroom. Yes, there was the big solid figure of the silk merchant still at the desk. The left side of his face was down upon the desk-top.

As the two women tiptoed into the study other aspects of the gruesome scene became clear to them. Paul Jacques' right hand and arm lay on the desk and a bullet-hole had been drilled into his right temple. A revolver lay on the desk several inches away from his right hand. The papers that he had been examining were spattered with blood. With an ear-piercing scream Madame Jacques turned and ran from the room. . . .

Of course it was suicide. The police and the examining magistrate soon reached that conclusion, Madame Jacques' statement made the situation clear.

"My husband," she told the magistrate, "had been ill for some time. During our most recent stay in Mexico our home had burned and he had suffered heavy financial losses. He never recovered from that blow. Since we came to Paris the thought that his business was failing had become an obsession with him. He brooded about it ; several times he threatened suicide. Doctors told me that they believed he was suffering from a tumour of the stomach, but I think his brain was affected."

The story checked, so the case was closed. It seemed obvious that Monsieur Jacques had reached into the drawer of his desk, pulled out his gun, sent a bullet crashing into his right temple. That he had done this at a moment when he was prepared to start upon a journey was one of those mysterious things that could not be explained.

Once Paul Jacques had expressed the wish—so his pretty widow said—to be buried in the little graveyard of his native village, Saint Paul de Ubaye, in the south of France. Now she proceeded to carry out the request. She accompanied the body south for burial and a curious thing happened.

Before the coffin was sealed Madame Jacques pinned to the shroud eight letters, apparently in her husband's handwriting. In these letters Paul Jacques alternately threatened suicide, and in vague phrases begged forgiveness for his conduct towards his wife. No one knew that the letters were in the coffin but Madame Jacques herself.

The charming widow hurried back to her two daughters in her Paris apartment and proceeded to straighten out her husband's affairs. Contrary to what had been expected, those affairs were in excellent shape ; the widow and daughters realized an inheritance of two hundred thousand dollars. The estate was in cash, bonds and business property in Mexico.

Among the friends of Paul Jacques there were

whispered suspicions; they knew that the dead silk merchant had disliked his wife, that he believed she had been unfaithful to him with numerous lovers. And there was something more.

Madame Chambre, the concierge, or janitress, at 107 Rue de Sèvres, recalled that on the evening before his death Monsieur Jacques had stopped her downstairs in the hallway and said: "I must tell you something of the utmost importance." But before he could continue someone else appeared and he had left, saying: "I'll tell you to-morrow." Also, Georgette Picourla, the maid, confided to the concierge that once she had seen Madame Jacques pour some white powder into her husband's soup. Georgette had warned Monsieur Jacques and he had not eaten the soup. But neither Georgette nor Madame Chambre talked to the police. And there was something more.

In the village of Saint Paul de Ubaye an old priest, the Reverend Canon Plesent, sat in his office fingering a letter. He was a kindly, white-haired old man with a face tanned the colour of the soil; he had been a boyhood friend of Paul Jacques; the letter had been written to him by the dead silk merchant eight years before, in January, 1906. It read in part:

"She is capable of anything; capable of putting me out of the way if she can do it with impunity. I know that once she tried to poison me by giving me a substitute for pyramidon. She associates with Bohemians and blackguards. I tell you I would seek a divorce but for one thing, I am afraid of what will happen to the children. However, I beg one thing of you. If I should happen to die accidentally, will you see that an investigation is made. My wife will be concerned in my death without doubt."

The Reverend Canon Plesent had preserved this letter for obvious reasons, now he took it to the relatives of the late Paul Jacques. There he met opposition. The well-to-do family abhorred scandal above all things. They argued, even if a crime had been committed, how could it be proved? The Reverend Canon Plesent, feeling there was nothing

more he could do, returned to his sanctuary and said no more.

All this happened in May. In July, 1914, the war crashed over Europe, the German armies marched upon Paris. Thoughts of little things, such as the *salon* of Hera Mirtel and the mysterious death of her husband, were swept from the minds of all concerned. In October of that year the widow gave up her apartment on the Rue de Sèvres and sailed for Mexico with her two daughters. New and sinister developments lay ahead.

In the Fall of 1914, the widowed Madame Jacques leased an apartment on one of Mexico City's fashionable boulevards, opened a new *salon*, drew new faces around her. Her two daughters were placed in school. As her deceased husband's business interests had been extensive, the widow had to do considerable travelling about Mexico. In March, 1915, in the little town of Tolmo, she met the man who was to shape her future life. He was Georges Weissmann-Bessarabo, a young Roumanian who had become a naturalized Frenchman, dropping the name of Weissmann.

Bessarabo was vaguely supposed to be in business, really he was an adventurer on the look out for a chance to better himself. He was slender, handsome, soft, ingratiating and about ten years younger than Madame Jacques. He had an easy way with women; within five minutes he knew that this rich and personable Madame Jacques liked him. Her dark eyes sparkled when she looked his way.

During the remainder of her visit in Tolmo, Georges Bessarabo managed to see Madame Jacques each day; on the first day of her return to Mexico City the young man presented himself at her home, a surprise visit.

"Please forgive me, I could not stay away! He bowed over the widow's slim white hand, kissed it fervently but respectfully. "After you left, Tolmo seemed desolate. Never have I met anyone whose graciousness and beauty have affected me so deeply. I really feel——"

Madame Jacques raised a protesting hand. "Oh,

you mustn't talk like that," she whispered. "We have known each other such a short while."

But she was delighted and Bessarabo saw it. He became more ardent, he pressed his suit swiftly; before the afternoon had passed he had held her in his arms and begged her to marry him.

Madame Jacques was a shrewd woman of the world, perhaps that is why she did not capitulate at once. Perhaps she sensed that this handsome young man might be more interested in her fortune than herself. But a woman in love can't be shrewd for long—in December, 1915, they were married.

It was an ironic situation, reversing in each detail her earlier marriage. Now Madame Bessarabo was rich, but married to a youth she loved madly but who, she was soon to learn, could be unfaithful to her with complete indifference. As for Georges Bessarabo, if he had known what lay ahead he would not have been so eager to marry the rich widow.

At first the Bessarabos were happy in their Mexico City home. The young husband looked after his adoring wife's business interests; he invited a number of his friends to her salon, he invested some of her money in new business ventures.

One of these ventures concerned a gold concession of twenty-five thousand acres in the Oaxaca Valley in the south of Mexico. It was called El Higo and a sinister old legend was associated with it. According to the legend the treasure of gold would not be found until three men had died violent deaths.

Yet Georges Bessarabo and two of his friends, Monsieur Charles Becker and Monsieur Henri Leon, invested heavily in the shares of the mine. Becker was a French business man living in Mexico City, Leon a Parisian advertising agent who had happened to make a trip to Mexico.

No wonder Madame Jacques was frightened. "I don't like these stories of bad luck and violent deaths associated with El Higo," she told her husband. "I wish you hadn't put your money into it."

Bessarabo laughed, kissed her heavily rouged mouth.

"You darling!" he whispered. "You mustn't worry about the stories superstitious people tell you."

So the incident was closed and the parts Monsieur Becker and Monsieur Leon were to play in our strange story remained unrevealed until later. The following year, 1916, the Bessarabos returned to Paris to live, taking Madame's older daughter with them. The other daughter remained in school in Mexico City.

When the Bessarabos leased an apartment at No. 3 Square la Bruyere, the Paris reading public began to hear of Hera Mirtel again. New books appeared and again the lady's salon was graced by literary people. But there was a difference; in earlier days Hera Mirtel had been alluring, now she was fifty-one years old and looked her age. Her friends blamed this good-looking second husband of hers; they said that he spent her money upon other women and that she was madly jealous, but helpless.

Everyone knew that the Bessarabos quarrelled violently. Madame's jealousy often transformed her into a tigress. Monsieur Bessarabo had an office at 67 Rue de la Victoire where he was supposed to carry on certain transactions relating to the lumber business. He also had several feminine secretaries in whom he took a romantic interest.

But in spite of quarrels and Monsieur Bessarabo's philanderings the couple managed to live together until July 30th, 1920. Then something happened that shocked and horrified all France. . . .

On the morning of August 2nd, Commissioner Thierry of the Paris Police was seated in his office in the Rue de la Rochefouchauld. His district embrace the Saint Georges Quarter. A gendarme announced that a man named Edouard Croix wished to see the commissioner about something important.

"Let him come in," said Thierry.

A moment later the door opened admitting a short, heavy-set man carrying a cap with a chauffeur's badge. The visitor was excited.

"I am employed at the Saint-Didier Garage," began

Croix. "I drive a limousine and I am often employed by Monsieur Bessarabo who lives at No. 3 Square le Bruyere. On Friday, I drove Monsieur Bessarabo to the bank where he deposited two hundred thousand francs in cash. On Saturday morning, I had another engagement with him; I was to drive him to the country.

"But when I reached Monsieur Bessarabo's home on Saturday morning he did not meet me as he had promised. Instead I saw his wife, who told me that he had gone out of town on business and that he would return this morning. But I have just come from his home and he is not there."

Commissioner Thierry, a grey-bearded detective, raised his eyebrows in surprise. "What is so unusual about that?"

Croix came a step nearer the police official's desk. "I am sure something has happened to Monsieur Bessarabo. I feel that he is dead!"

"Why do you feel that?"

The chauffeur paused before answering. "Because Monsieur Bessarabo has told me that he was afraid of his wife. The janitor at their home has also told me that they quarrelled fiercely and that they had an awful fight late on Friday evening. I am certain Monsieur Bessarabo would have kept his appointment with me Saturday morning if he had been able to keep it. And there's something more.

"When I went to the Bessarabo home Saturday morning expecting to find Monsieur I offered my services to his wife. But she refused to use my car saying that she had a very heavy trunk to be taken to the station and that she needed a taxi. I saw that trunk. I spoke to the janitor about it. He said there was something heavy inside it that kept flopping around as he carried it."

The chauffeur's concluding sentence sent a cold chill down Commissioner Thierry's spine, but his face was expressionless. He knew only too well that perfectly ordinary happenings can be made to seem suspicious by an imaginative person. He said quietly:

"I'll look into it myself. Please leave your address with the man at the desk outside ; I may want to call upon you later."

Commissioner Thierry leaned back in his chair, watched the chauffeur leave the office. Then he pressed a button and summoned Inspector Corot. Briefly, he explained the information. Five minutes later the two detectives were walking down the street toward the Bessarabo home.

No 3 Square la Bruyere is in a short blind thoroughfare, off the Rue Pigalle. It's a six-storey, grey stone house in a long line of such houses. Commissioner Thierry and Inspector Corot reached it shortly before noon on this Monday, August 2nd, and talked to the janitor, whose name was Cholet. They soon learned that he shared the chauffeur's suspicions as to the disappearance of *debonair* Monsieur Bessarabo.

Yes, said the janitor, it was true that Monsieur and Madame Bessarabo had quarrelled violently on the night of July 30th. The neighbours had heard them, and he himself had been aroused by the loud talk, which had lasted until long after midnight. He had not been able to sleep, and he had also noticed that the lights were still on in the Bessarabo apartment at daybreak. He had a vague impression that the Bessarabos had had a visitor, who had left after midnight, but he wasn't sure. He had heard someone hurrying through the hallways, heard the front door slam.

"And Saturday morning," the janitor continued, "Madame Bessarabo knocked upon my door about nine o'clock. She told me that her husband had been called away on business but had left a trunk filled with important papers and books which she must send to the railway station at once. I was surprised, because I had not seen Monsieur Bessarabo leave the building, although I had been in my downstairs room here by the front door.

"I went up to her apartment and saw the trunk." She also had a packed valise. The trunk was an old one and I saw at once that it was badly roped. I said I would untie it, make a better job of the roping, but

Madame Bessarabo stopped me. She was very excited. She produced another piece of rope and told me to put it round the trunk in addition. I did that, tying the second piece of rope with a special kind of knot.

"Then Madame Bessarabo and her daughter, Paulette, went down the stairs and hailed a taxi. The taxi-driver and I carried the trunk and valise downstairs, and I helped him to tie the trunk to the rear of his car. We both noticed its great weight, also the way something moved around inside. It did not seem like books; it seemed like one large object. Then Madame Bessarabo and her daughter drove off and I haven't seen them since."

Commissioner Thierry nodded, then asked quickly: "Did you get the taxi-driver's number?"

"Yes," said Janitor Cholet, "I saw his badge—G-7."

"Good." Thierry stepped to a telephone in the janitor's room, called his office at the Saint Georges Quarter police station, left word for Inspector Philippon to find Chauffeur G-7.

Next Thierry turned to the janitor again. "Get your pass-key," he ordered. "We'll go up to the Bessarabo apartment."

It was a six-room apartment, well-furnished. The janitor led the two detectives from room to room, but they found nothing that suggested a crime. In the drawing-room were three unwashed coffee cups on the piano. The janitor stopped before one door and spoke.

"This is Monsieur Bessarabo's bedroom."

Commissioner Thierry stepped into a large, well-lighted room. A brass bed stood out from the wall, a striped coverlet was thrown over it. Thierry threw back the coverlet, saw that *the sheets were fresh and that no one had slept between them*. He turned to the janitor.

"You have no idea where Madame Bessarabo and her daughter have gone?"

"No."

"They did not say when they would return?"

"They said several days."

Commissioner Thierry lit a cigarette. "Do you know Monsieur Bessarabo's business address?"

"Yes, 67 Rue de la Victoire."

Thierry and Corot left the apartment and questioned the neighbours. From everyone they got the same story of violent quarrels between Monsieur and Madame Bessarabo. The young husband had confided to one of the neighbours that he feared for his life.

Thierry turned to Inspector Corot. "I'll go to Bessarabo's office in the Rue de la Victoire," he announced. "You stay here, watch the apartment. If Madame Bessarabo and her daughter return, get their explanations. Telephone my office and don't let the two women disturb the apartment. We may want to search it."

Commissioner Thierry hailed a taxi and drove to 67 Rue de la Victoire. But he found the office locked. The janitor there told him that Bessarabo had three employees, a man named Monsieur Grainot and two girl secretaries, Mlle. Cazenave and Mlle. Nollot. He gave the detective the addresses of all three.

Within an hour Thierry had talked to Monsieur Grainot and the two girls at their homes. Interviewed separately, they all agreed that there was something suspicious about the sudden disappearance of their employer. Grainot told how Bessarabo was expecting to receive a large sum of money in a business deal—six hundred thousand francs—on the first of the month. He had not appeared to collect the money, but Madame Bessarabo had arrived at the office with a paper signed by her husband giving her power of attorney to receive it.

Madame Bessarabo had walked into the office on Saturday, July 31st, to announce that her husband had gone to Evian, a health resort, for an indefinite stay and that the office would be closed until his return.

But where were Madame Bessarabo and her daughter? The two girl secretaries, Mlle. Nollot and Mlle. Cazenave, both declared that the two women had probably gone to Montmorency, a small town near

Paris, where Bessarabo owned a villa. The family often went there for week-end vacations.

Mlle Nollot became quite excited as she talked to Commissioner Thierry. "I have been fearful for a long time," said the pretty secretary, "that Madame would do something to harm her husband. Two years ago she tried to choke him to death. She came upon him while he was asleep. He showed me the marks of her fingers on his throat afterwards!"

A half hour later Commissioner Thierry was in a police car driving toward Montmorency; Inspector Corot was still on guard at the Bessarabo apartment in 3 Square la Bruyere; Inspector Philippon had not yet located the taxi-driver, G-7. As Commissioner Thierry's car approached Montmorency, he reflected that this whole investigation might be a wild-goose chase. So far there was no evidence of crime. Monsieur Bessarabo might be alive and well. However——

The police car drew to a stop before a house on the outskirts of Montmorency. The Bessarabo villa was a small but charming house, set well back on the street, with a garden of rose bushes and fruit trees in front. No one was in sight as Thierry came up the walk and knocked at the front door. A servant admitted him, assured him that Madame Bessarabo and her daughter were at home, showed him into a small drawing-room, asked him to wait.

As he sat waiting Thierry reflected again, and began to doubt that violence had been done to the mysterious Bessarabo. This scene was peaceful; certainly Madame Bessarabo and her daughter were not trying to run away. The Commissioner heard a swish of skirts in the hall, then a lady stood in the doorway. She faced him with a slight questioning smile.

Thierry rose; he guessed that the lady was in her early fifties. She was expensively dressed in dark clothes, her black hair was touched with grey, her dark blue eyes were so strangely luminous as to give the impression of pent-up emotion. Yet she was completely at her ease.

"I'm sorry to intrude," Thierry bowed, smiled

gravely. Curiously, he was a poet himself, so he knew the poetic works of Hera Mirtel. "I represent the police of the Saint Georges Quarter in Paris; we are trying to locate Monsieur Bessarabo. You are his wife?"

"Yes." The lady took a step forward, her strange, dark eyes became even more vivid, *and Thierry felt their power*. "My husband left Paris Saturday morning. I suppose he is at Evian, but I'm not certain. He doesn't inform me as to all his movements, but I don't see why the police should investigate. Have you reason to believe anything has happened to him?"

A natural note of anxiety had crept into Madame Bessarabo's tone at her concluding sentence; Commissioner Thierry smiled deprecatingly.

"I hope not," he said. "We have telegraphed to Evian; he hasn't been located there. Will you tell me the circumstances of Monsieur Bessarabo's leave-taking on Saturday morning?"

"Of course," said Madame Bessarabo. She sat down facing Thierry. "My husband came home Friday night as usual and left early Saturday morning. As I say, I don't keep track of his whereabouts. He asked me to send a trunk containing valuable papers to an address in Nancy and I did it. Then my daughter and I came out here for several days' stay."

Thierry sensed that Madame Bessarabo was fencing with him, that she realized he knew something about the trunk, so she quickly brought it into the conversation with an appearance of frankness. He thought he heard the soft swish of skirts again in the hallway. Was it the daughter outside listening?

"Yes, the trunk," he said quietly. "Can you tell me something about it? Its destination, what it contained?"

Suddenly, Madame Bessarabo seemed ill at ease: "I would rather not discuss it," she said nervously. "But if you insist I will—to protect myself and my daughter. My husband has been engaged in some mysterious business which I do not understand. I know that he had many papers important to him and

that these seemed to have German associations. I know he was most anxious to get rid of them. Two weeks ago he shipped away a large bundle of such papers, I don't know where."

Thierry's eyebrows rose in genuine astonishment; this was a new angle. "Are you suggesting," he asked bluntly, "that your husband is a spy?"

"I suggest nothing," said Madame Bessarabo, sharply. "I merely tell you what I know. And I know that my husband was a most secretive person in all his activities. He simply told me to take a trunk and a valise to the station and ship them."

"What station? And what destination?" Now Thierry's tone was sharp, too.

"It's an involved story." Madame Bessarabo smiled disarmingly. "Following my husband's instructions, my daughter and I took the trunk and valise to the Gare du Nord (North Station). My daughter and I waited and after about an hour Monsieur Bessarabo arrived. He transferred the trunk and valise to another taxi, told us to await his return. We waited another hour, then the taxi returned without my husband."

"The taxi-driver handed me a blue card, with instructions in my husband's handwriting. The instructions were to transfer the trunk to the Gare de l'Est (East Station) and ship it to a woman named Garnier living at Stanislas place in the city of Nancy. I did not see the valise again; evidently my husband had taken it with him."

"My daughter and I then drove to the Gare de l'Est and tipped a porter twenty francs to buy a third-class ticket to Nancy. I turned the trunk over to him to be checked and left the station. That's all I know, but when my husband returns he can, no doubt, give you a more complete explanation."

Commissioner Thierry had listened with an expressionless face to this statement. Suddenly he rose.

"I will first ask you to produce the blue card on which your husband's instructions were written," he said. "Next I must ask you and your daughter to return with me to Paris until this affair is straightened out."

Madame Bessarabo rose, too; her big eyes first registered astonishment, then complete calm. "We have the blue card here," she said, "and will be glad to turn it over to you. If you insist, we'll also accompany you to Paris, but I assure you it's annoying."

Commissioner Thierry bowed, said nothing.

Thierry brought Madame Bessarabo and her daughter back to Paris, a painful journey. Mlle. Paulette was a pretty twenty-year-old girl with a round, doll-like face, but her prettiness was obscured by continual weeping during the trip. Madame Bessarabo sat with her arm around Paulette, constantly reassuring her. When they reached Paris things began to happen.

Telegrams to the police at Evian had still failed to locate Monsieur Bessarabo, but Inspector Philippon had found taxi-driver G-7, whose explanation of the trip to the station did not exactly match Madame Bessarabo's story.

He said the two women had ordered him to drive to the Gare du Nord, then told him to wait while they went inside the station. He had waited for some time with the trunk still strapped on his taxi. He was under the impression, but was not sure, that he had seen the two women talking to a man on the station steps. At any rate, he was certain that there had been no transfer of the trunk and valise to another taxi at the Gare du Nord. Madame Bessarabo and her daughter had finally returned to his taxi and ordered him to drive to the Gare de l'Est. At the second station Madame Bessarabo had paid him and dismissed him after a porter removed the trunk. She herself had carried the valise.

The porter at the Gare de l'Est was soon found. Yes, he remembered Madame Bessarabo and Paulette; he recalled, very well, the trunk. He had not seen the valise. His statement agreed with those of the taxi-driver and the janitor that the trunk had been very heavy and had seemed to contain one large object, which had moved around inside when the trunk was tipped. Madame Bessarabo had given him money to buy a third-class ticket to Nancy, and he had followed orders in checking the trunk on this ticket. He had

been surprised later when neither Madame Bessarabo nor anyone else returned to claim and use the ticket. He still had the ticket.

After the porter had checked the trunk into the baggage-room he had worried about it, he explained to Thierry. He hadn't liked the noise it made as he moved it. So he had gone to the chief of the porters and explained his suspicions. But the chief had waved him away, told him not to bother about things that were none of his business.

Wires had already been sent to the Nancy police to find the trunk ; now came a disconcerting answer. It could not be located and there was no Madam Garnier living at Stanislas Place in Nancy. What did this mean ?

Commissioner Thierry was now convinced that a crime had been committed, but whether Bessarabo had been murdered or whether he had had a part in murdering someone else remained unexplained. Who was the mysterious man whom the taxi-driver, G-7, believed he had seen talking to Madame Bessarabo and her daughter at the Gare du Nord ? Had there really been a man, or had Madame Bessarabo cleverly suggested to the taxi-driver that such a man had been present ?

All these points baffled the indefatigable Thierry, and his two assistants, Inspectors Philippon and Corot. The three detectives had taken Madame Bessarabo and Paulette to the Saint Georges Police Station for further questioning while they gave the apartment at 3 Square la Bruyere and Monsieur Bessarabo's office in the Rue de la Victoire a thorough searching.

This search produced interesting evidence. The paper with Bessarabo's signature giving his wife power of attorney to collect six hundred thousand francs, due to him on August 1st, was found. Handwriting experts offered the opinion that this signature was a clever forgery. The note on the blue card, also with Bessarabo's signature, which Madame Bessarabo insisted had been given to her at the Gare du Nord, was also said to be an imitation. In addition, a number of

letters in Madame Bessarabo's handwriting were found in the Bessarabo apartment—these letters suggesting in a vague way a plot against someone. One phrase read: "We must catch him by ruse."

After her first statement to Commissioner Thierry, Madame Bessarabo refused to say anything more. She and her daughter were allowed to return to their apartment, but a police guard was kept over them constantly. Then, on August 4th, came a new development: *the trunk was found*.

It was located under a pile of other trunks in the big baggage room at Nancy, where it had been overlooked before. The Paris Police hurried to Nancy, took photographs of it before it was opened, then removed the two ropes and prized open the lid. Inside was a terrific stench and the swollen body of a man. The body was nude, wrapped in a raincoat. Stuffed around the doubled-up figure were pieces of a man's clothing. The man had been killed by a shot through the right temple, but his face had been beaten, too, and the skull was crushed.

Was the man in the trunk Georges Bessarabo? Relatives and friends of Bessarabo said it was, but Madame Bessarabo denied it vehemently. After the body was brought to Paris, Madame Bessarabo and Paulette were put through what the French call the Ordeal of Confrontation. The two women were forced to look upon the remains of the man they were now charged with murdering, while detectives, including Commissioner Thierry and the Judge of Instruction, Monsieur Bonin, stood nearby and conducted an interrogation. Mlle. Paulette wept and said nothing; Madame Bessarabo calmly reiterated her failure to identify her dead husband.

Later, Commissioner Thierry and Judge Bonin questioned the accused women further.

"We have learned that your husband was in fear of his life, that you had often threatened him," Thierry began. "We know that you stood to gain six hundred thousand francs by your husband's death, and we believe that you forged his signature to a paper which

would have brought you that amount on the day after his death. But we think you had an additional motive, jealousy. We have learned that your husband had dinner with one of his mistresses on the night he died, that he came home shortly before midnight to engage in a violent quarrel with you. We believe you shot him, as witnesses say you had often threatened to do."

Madame Bessarabo gazed at Thierry and Judge Bonin with sadly reproachful eyes. "Gentlemen, you are wrong. The story I have told about Bessarabo sending me the trunk with the note is true. Either he murdered someone and placed the body in the trunk, or someone murdered him and did likewise. But I do not believe the man in the trunk is Bessarabo."

"No?" Commissioner Thierry's question was coldly sceptical. "Remember, Madame, that the taxi-driver's statement contradicts your own, and makes it clear that the trunk containing the body was not removed from his taxi until it was turned over to the porter who shipped it to Nancy. Remember that the janitor who roped the trunk at your apartment tied the rope with a special knot, and that a photograph of the trunk taken in Nancy before the trunk was unroped, shows the knot still in place. In other words, the body in the trunk was there when it left your apartment and that body was Bessarabo."

Madame Bessarabo listened with unwavering calm, then merely repeated softly, "Gentlemen, you are wrong."

She was a strange prisoner; the police found it easy to pick flaws in her story, but she would quickly explain the discrepancies away with more fanciful tales. *Her persuasiveness at times suggested hypnotic power.*

Finally, Madame Bessarabo and Paulette were taken to the famous St. Lazare Prison in Paris to await trial. Meanwhile, Commissioner Thierry and other detectives searched determinedly for more evidence. Thierry recalled that when he had examined Bessarabo's bed at 3 Square la Bruyere on August 2nd, the sheets on the bed were fresh, had not been slept in. A medical examination showed that Bessarabo had probably

been shot in his sleep. Hence, Thierry deduced that bloody bed linen had been disposed of somewhere. Also, the revolver which killed Bessarabo had not been found.

The detective believed that the bed linen and revolver had been in the valise which Madame Bessarabo had carried when she and Paulette had left their home with the trunk. But where was the valise? New information suggested the answer.

Near the village of Montmorency is the Lake of Enghien. A boatman living near there now came forward with a queer story of two women who had rented a boat from him on the morning of August 1st. The elder of the two women had explained that they wished to spend the day on the lake. This woman had carried under her arm a bulky package, not a valise.

The women had rented the boat and pulled away into the morning mist. As they rowed they had talked in a foreign tongue (presumably Spanish, which both Madame Bessarabo and Paulette spoke). Within half an hour the two women returned to shore without their package. The younger one then explained that her companion felt ill and that they would have to hurry to a doctor.

The boatman could not be certain in his identification of Madame Bessarabo and Paulette. An attempt was made to find the weighted package, which the police believed had been thrown into the water, but the lake was large and it could not be located.

Commissioner Thierry was also examining the theory that a man, one of Madame Bessarabo's lovers, had played some part in the crime; but there was little to substantiate it. However, the Commissioner remembered that on the morning he had entered the Bessarabo apartment he had found three unwashed coffee cups on the piano. And Mlle. Paulette insisted that she had taken no coffee on the night her stepfather disappeared.

Had Madame Bessarabo, then, been entertaining a man at the time her husband returned? Had her husband drunk a cup of coffee before retiring? Had the shooting come just after Bessarabo dropped off to

sleep? Had the male guest fled from the apartment just after the crime?

The reader will recall that the janitor had a vague recollection of seeing a man leave the house after Bessarabo had come home, that the chauffeur, G-7, also had a vague recollection of seeing a man talking to Madame Bessarabo at the Gare du Nord. But in spite of their persistent digging, the French police could unearth no further evidence that linked a man, any man, with the crime.

Madame Bessarabo, herself, provided the next sensation; *she confessed*. From her statement it was obvious that she was trying to protect her daughter.

"When my husband came home on the night of July 30th," she said, "he dropped a letter from his pocket and I picked it up. It was from one of his mistresses. I demanded that he never see the woman again; he refused. He said if I interfered with him in any of his romances he would see that my daughter was prevented from making a good marriage. With those words he stepped into his room and went to bed.

"After my husband had fallen asleep, I went into his room and shot him. It was only justice. This all occurred early in the morning. I wrapped up the body and hid it in the trunk; I disposed of the gun and bloody bed-linen. My daughter knew nothing about it."

Now it seemed that the case was cleared up, ready to be closed. But—nothing of the kind. Next day Madame Bessarabo retracted her statement, declared she had made it merely because her daughter was in danger. She went back to her first story.

On that same day something else happened to bring confusion into the case. In the forest of Vincennes, near Paris, the body of a man was found hanging from a tree, apparently a suicide. From documents in the pockets and from other sources the corpse was identified as that of Charles Becker, the Paris business man who had been associated with Georges Bessarabo in the development of the El Higo sinister gold concession in Mexico.

Why had Charles Becker committed suicide? Or had he been murdered and strung up to the tree to make the act look like suicide?

There were reports that Becker had been the lover of Madame Bessarabo. Had Becker been present when Madame Bessarabo killed her husband? Had he been a party to the crime? Had he killed himself from remorse and fear of arrest? No one knew.

When Thierry questioned Madame Bessarabo about Becker she confused the issue still further. She denied that Becker had ever been her lover, then she hinted darkly that the deaths of Becker and Bessarabo were linked. She suggested that both had made enemies because of their interest in the El Higo gold mines; that these enemies were responsible for their deaths.

In the next breath she declared that Becker and Bessarabo had been about the same height, weight and colouring, that perhaps the man in the trunk had been Becker and the man hanging in the Vincennes forest, Bessarabo. She followed this up with a statement that neither body was Bessarabo, that she was certain the latter had fled to America!

What a woman! In her confusing of issues Madame Bessarabo was a genius. Her contradictory statements were given full play in the French Press, several million Parisians turned detective and advanced theories. The police were bombarded with letters, the sale of Madame Bessarabo's books increased ten-fold.

According to the legend of El Higo, the gold treasure would not be found until three men had died violent deaths. Now Bessarabo and Becker were gone. A few weeks after Becker's death, the third Frenchman known to have bought shares in the mine, Monsieur Leon, advertising agent, died!

He was walking along a Paris street when he passed a building under construction. A workman dropped a heavy plank that crushed Leon's skull. This death was surely an accident, yet Madame Bessarabo in her cell at St. Lazare Prison triumphantly proclaimed that the legend of three violent deaths had come true. She seemed to think that this, somehow, exonerated her!

On February 15th, 1921, Madame Bessarabo and Mlle. Paulette went on trial. Meanwhile, the French Police had backtracked Madame's career, searching for evidence. They had exhumed the body of Paul Jacques, her first husband, found the eight letters pinned to his shroud. They believed Madame Bessarabo had forged these letters and placed them in Jacques' coffin, thinking that the body might be exhumed and that the letters would offer mute testimony in her favour.

The police also located Mlle. Georgette Picourla, the maid in the Jacques home at the time of Paul Jacques' death; and the concierge at 107 Rue de Sèvres, where Jacques had died. The statements of these two women suggested that the former Madame Jacques had wanted to get rid of her husband.

The Reverend Canon Plesent came forward with the letter Paul Jacques had written him. The old priest had waited a long time to avenge his friend, but now Paul Jacques' letter was introduced as evidence. Also Monsieur Signoret, pharmacist and friend of the dead Paul Jacques, appeared with another letter Jacques had written him. This letter from beyond the grave, like the one written to Canon Plesent, expressed Jacques' fears that his wife was planning to kill him.

The prosecution could not prove that Madame Bessarabo had killed her first husband, but they did use the evidence concerning Jacques' mysterious death for all it was worth. The evidence to prove that she had killed Bessarabo was presented substantially as I have given it here.

Madame Bessarabo and Paulette were defended by two of the ablest lawyers in Paris. They were difficult clients; Madame Bessarabo acted like a Shakespearean tragedienne of the old school. She constantly interrupted the patient efforts of the court president to ascertain facts by her own declamatory efforts. This reacted so strongly against her that her attorney, Monsieur de Moro-Giafferi, hit upon a method of silencing her. Whenever her meaningless talk seemed to be leading her toward dangerous admissions, the

lawyer would hold up a crude drawing he had made of the guillotine so that Madame Bessarabo alone could see it. That made her hold her tongue.

Mlle. Paulette appeared to be dominated absolutely by her mother. I have suggested earlier that Madame Bessarabo seemed to possess hypnotic power; the trial had not progressed far before the authorities reached the conclusion that the mother had the daughter under a spell and that Paulette was literally unable to answer certain questions with her mother present.

Paulette would announce: "There is a secret concerning Bessarabo's death which I cannot tell." As the prosecution lawyers attempted to draw the secret from her Madame Bessarabo would rise, fix Paulette with her intense gaze, sharply order her in Spanish to remain silent.

So the trial progressed with this frequent mention of the "secret," but with the authorities powerless to learn what Paulette meant. Gendarmes escorted Madame Bessarabo from the courtroom, but still the girl would not talk. Then, on the day of the trial's end, came a dramatic climax.

Whether Paulette's lawyer, Maître Raymond Hubert, shrewdly arranged this climax or whether it came spontaneously from the girl herself, I cannot tell. Mlle. Paulette suddenly rose in court and announced that she would reveal the "secret." At the last moment Madame Bessarabo's hypnotic power had failed!

What was the secret? Nothing much.

"I was awakened," said Mlle. Paulette, "early on the morning of July 31st, by an explosion. I got out of bed, found my door locked. I cried out: 'Mamma, what is the matter?'"

"I thought I heard in the bathroom near my room, a sound like a man gargling his throat. I thought it was my step-father. Finally, my mother opened the door, I left my room, saw a figure on the bed. I understood.

" 'Mamma, what have you done?' I cried.

" 'It was his life or mine,' she answered."

Paulette then told how she had wished to notify the police, how her mother had prevented her, how she (Paulette) had been sent to the sixth floor to find an empty trunk. She then detailed how the corpse had been placed in the trunk, how it had been taken from the house and how she, under her mother's instruction, had written the blue note supposed to have come from Bessarabo and had forged Bessarabo's name to the paper giving her mother power of attorney to collect the six hundred thousand francs.

"There is the famous secret," concluded Paulette. "My mother came to me in prison and said: 'I swear to you that I am innocent. You heard the revolver shot, but you did not see everything. There was a man. There was also a man at the Gare du Nord.'"

The jury was out four hours. They returned with a verdict of guilty—"but with mitigating circumstances"—against Madame Bessarabo. They acquitted Paulette. Madame Bessatabo was sentenced to twenty years in prison.

So, Paul Jacques and Georges Bessarabo each died with a bullet in his right temple; Charles Becker hanged himself from a tree. Three dead men in the life-span of the lady with the hypnotic eyes. And—some mysteries that can never be completely explained.

Now Commissioner Thierry is dead. Madame Bessarabo died about two years ago in the Central Prison at Rennes, France. As for Paulette, no one seems to know exactly where she is. A few months ago a brief item in a Paris newspaper said that she was leaving Paris for foreign lands to serve as a Christian missionary.

CHAPTER XVIII

The "Blazing Car Murder" of Northampton. Full scientific account of the crime. Who was the unknown man? Rouse, the murderer, was hypnotic. Did he "will" this victim to his death? An account of hypnotism by one of the greatest scientific experimenters—by a magistrate. Was the "Brides in the Bath" murderer hypnotic? The late Sir Edward Marshall Hall's account of his client, George Joseph Smith. Reference to the state or feeling—as well as a comment upon Mesmer, Braid, etc., and the inception of modern psycho-therapeutics. The murder of a man by a woman induced into a state of hypnosis by her lover. A case of blackmail and crime induced by a woman upon another by alleged hypnotic influence.

ON the 5th of November, 1930, an unknown man met his death in a small saloon car in a lonely lane near Northampton. Nearly three months later, on the 31st of January, 1931, Alfred Arthur Rouse was sentenced to death for his murder.

Circumstantial evidence and his own foolishness led to his arrest, while scientific evidence was largely responsible for his ultimate conviction.

Rouse was born in 1894, and his life, apart from a certain aptitude whilst at school both for work and games, was without distinction until he reached the age of twenty. Four days after war broke out he joined the Army and was severely wounded in the following May, being subsequently discharged as being no longer fit for active service. A medical report of September, 1918, showed that he was still complaining of the effects of the head wound received three years previously.

Between 1920 and 1930 he formed associations with three women; associations that involved him in such appalling difficulties that he finally decided to end matters by a single bold stroke. By two of these women he had had children, and the pregnancy of the third, no doubt, lent force to his decision to be free.

At the date of the crime he was a commercial traveller, and it was in the course of his rounds whilst visiting a certain public house at Whetstone that he first met the unfortunate man who was destined to be his victim.

Rouse chose Guy Fawkes' night as being a time when a blaze was least likely to attract attention. It was a case of loose reasoning, a little reflection would have convinced him that it was possibly the worst day in the whole year ; more people are abroad on that night up to late hours than at any other time.

The blazing car, the finding of the body and Rouse's subsequent arrest are features of the case well known to everyone. They do not concern us here, and are fully and admirably retold in the Famous Trials Series and in Miss Normanton's well-known book on the Rouse trial.

Rouse was arrested at Hammersmith on the evening of November 7th, 1930, and he then made the statement to which he clung so tenaciously all through his trial : " I picked up the man," he said to the Hammersmith Police, " on the Great North Road. He asked me for a lift. . . . I gave him a lift. He got in and I drove off and after going some distance I lost my way. A policeman spoke to me about my lights. I did not know anything about the man, and I thought I saw his hand on my case which was in the back of the car. I later became sleepy and could hardly keep awake. The engine started to spit and I thought I was running out of petrol. I pulled into the side of the road. I wanted to relieve myself and said to the man : ' There is some petrol in the car, you can empty it into the tank while I am gone,' and lifted up the bonnet and showed him where to put it in. He said : ' What about a smoke ? ' I said : ' I have given you all my cigarettes as it is.' I then put the petrol can, which I had opened, back in the car, with the top lightly on and walked 200 to 250 yards up the lane to be well out of sight for my purpose. Just as I had finished I saw a blaze and realized the car was in flames ; I lost my head."

The story was improbable, science proved that it was

not only untrue, but, as to some part of it, any rate, also physically impossible.

The body of the unfortunate victim was found lying across the front seats, face downwards with the right arm resting on the back of the driver's seat, the left leg being drawn close up under the body with knee and hip flexed, whilst the right leg was stretched out over the nearside chassis frame. Particles of smoke deposit were found in the man's nostrils, proving conclusively that he had breathed after the fire had started. A sudden and intense heat had set up what was described as "heat rigor," and Sir Bernard Spilsbury was able to demonstrate that the man had lived for a few seconds in that position, although unable to move, before he succumbed to the shock of the heat. Rigor had prevented the movement of his limbs, and it was tolerably certain that the leg was outside the car when the fire started and that the man himself was unconscious. A mallet which Rouse admitted he might have used in opening the petrol can was found nearby, and upon this were discovered three hairs. Microscopic examination showed that the medulla or core of one of these indicated human origin.

The dome of the skull was consumed by the flames and Mr. Justice Talbot warned the jury to disregard the question of how the victim lost consciousness—it is interesting to note that in his "confession" written after conviction, Rouse claimed to have throttled him. Next, and of no less importance, was the expert evidence of Colonel Buckle called on behalf of the Crown. He found, on examining the car some weeks after the fire, that part only of the windscreen frame had been burnt through by the fusing of the brass of which it was made. This indicated a source of heat very much greater than was possible in a fire caused by the ignition of loose petrol vapour, and so directed his mind to some more local source. His suspicions were confirmed by finding a loose petrol union under the dash of the car, which he contended could not have been caused by vibration or the accidental application of a man's foot. There was a considerable conflict of opinion on this point between

Colonel Buckle and Mr. Bamber, the expert called on behalf of the prisoner, but they were both agreed that the intense heat, which also fused part of the carburettor itself, was in all probability due to the lid of the float chamber being off when the fire started. This was a very significant fact when it was explained that there are vents in the lid to prevent gas becoming compressed and ignited in such a way as to blow off the lid against the spring clip. This resulted, as it was bound to result, in a very strong inference that the carburettor was deliberately tampered with. The condition of the fly-wheel casing also indicated, according to the experts, that the first source of fire was from inside the body of the car, and could not have originated from an accidental ignition of petrol by a cigarette or other means whilst filling the tank with petrol.

In a trial of the length of Rouse's, a great deal of evidence, scientific and otherwise, was given which it is impossible and unnecessary to reproduce in these pages. The cumulative effect of that evidence was to destroy and render improbable the story put forward by the prisoner. We shall never know what was in the minds of the jury when they arrived at their verdict, and, whilst it is highly unlikely that Rouse would have been convicted on the scientific evidence alone, that evidence undeniably went a long way to removing any doubt that the fire and death of the victim were caused accidentally.

This, in brief, is a concise account of one of the most cruel and extraordinary murders committed in our country. It has no parallel in crime annals—search where one may for any precedent!

But apart from this fact, whenever the "blazing car murder" mystery is discussed, up come the two perennial questions: Who was the unknown victim? Why—or How—did the murderer entice him into his car? In regard to the first question, this seems one that for all time will remain unanswered.

He, possibly, if the truth were known, never knew the murderer's motive, as a large shade of public opinion leans to the view, that at the time of the unknown's

death, the victim was in a trance, this cataleptic state having been brought about by Rouse, who possibly possessed hypnotic powers—which is a very sound supposition to the second question of—How?

Rouse was a man, who beyond becoming a murderer, had what was known as a personality! I use the term personality advisedly—if not guardedly—for the word personality to-day is a very commonplace phrase, and one which is apt to be misunderstood when applied to a person knowingly, or unknowingly, possessing animal magnetism or powers of intuitive hypnosis. Doctor Albert Moll, one of the greatest critical scientific investigators of hypnosis, defines in his classic work, *Hypnotism*, this human phenomenon as follows: "In order to understand the gradual development of modern hypnotism from animal magnetism, we must distinguish two points: Firstly, the belief that there are human beings endowed with a power, not acting by suggestion, but by means of which they can exercise an unwonted influence over others, either by direct contact or even from a distance; and secondly, the fact that a particular physical state, which we term hypnosis, can be induced in human beings by means of certain actions."

For another account, to quote the modern Press, no later than April 2nd of last year, a half column devoted to the subject by one of the greatest daily national newspapers in the country is of extreme interest which reads as follows:

"Magistrate as Hypnotist." "In Terror as he watched Result."

That experimenting in the realm of the occult is not entirely free from excitement and danger is shown by the experience of a London magistrate a night or two ago. This is his story, as told:

"For years I have made a study of hypnosis, particularly in relation to crime. Alone, or with others, I have often carried out experiments, and obtained interesting results. But I now realize that, in the hands of the unpractised, it might be dangerous.

"In the presence of half a dozen friends, mostly barristers, I 'willed' a subject (a law student), when in a state of hypnosis, to go to a violin case which lay on the floor in a corner of the room, take out the violin, and bring it to me.

" '*Deathly White Face.*'

"He advanced to the case, knelt down, and fingered with the fastenings. Then he struggled with them, but failed to open the case. He moaned and groaned horribly.

"Not a little alarmed, I approached him and found that his face was deathly white, and had a look of horror and anxiety. He continued to tug at the fastenings.

"Then it dawned on me that, maybe, the case was locked, and I examined it. I was right. I madly searched for the key, but failed to find it.

"Meantime, the groanings continued. I found a screwdriver and wrenched the thing open.

"Then the 'medium' smiled, took out the violin, and brought it to me at the spot at which he left me.

"I told him what had happened, but he knew nothing of it, though he is himself a student of these things.

"So quickly does the mind work that, while forcing the case, I had nasty visions of being brought up in my own court for causing the death of a friend.

"The experience taught me one thing at least—not to give a person who has been hypnotized an impossible task."

In the autobiography of that famous English criminal Counsel the late Sir Edward Marshall Hall, a very strange reference is made to hypnotism upon his part about the triple murderer, George Joseph Smith.

The killer of his three women victims known as the "Brides in the Bath" murders, held, according to Sir Edward, a strange uncanny stare in his eyes. It caused the great Counsel to feel distinctly ill at ease,—these impressions being made to his sub-conscious mind

when interviewing the murderer—his client—from time to time when on remand at Brixton Prison.

Sir Edward was of the private opinion that Smith was hypnotic, that he used these powers on his women victims, and it was by these means he encompassed their deaths.

This, in the face of all known facts, is quite within reason. Smith—and no person living is able to refute the possibility—might have induced them into a state of hypnosis by “suggestibility” and, having done so, walked into the bathroom, lifted up each victim’s legs and drowned her.

This form of animal magnetism known as Captivation and “pseudo-hypnosis” is borne out by many great scientific investigators and students in this field of study, such as Bernheim, Forel, William Hirsch, Bergmann, Lipps, Schrenck-Zotzing, Parish, Brodmann, Locuenfeld, Dollken, Hellpach, Hirschlaff, Sidis, Bechterew, Kraftt-Ebing, Julian Ochorowicz, etc., etc.

It is universally admitted that a look or stare of certain human beings can be good or evil, especially when concentrated upon the gaze of those who can be affected by such influences. Ever felt the look or stare of some person disturb you? A feeling for which you can give no reason—but, at the same time, you know the impression was recorded? Have you ever experienced such a feeling?

The cause or reason is beside the point. What matters is the instinctive impression or effect that is inexplicably aroused within our conscious or sub-conscious minds that such a state of feeling is experienced.

You may not be aware of it, but this is due to animal magnetism or hypnotic influence, dormant in all who breathe, in some weak, in some strong and in others very pronounced.

Those who develop this power are known as hypnotists. There is no need for mystery about it, although some charlatans resort to its use for so-called purposes of the “mystic,” whereas the other large school of alienists, professors, doctors, etc., cultivate its study on the side of the critical, experimental, and scientific.



(Above) The Blackheath murder, referred to in page 237.
 (Below) Exhumation of one of the victims of the "Brides in the Bath" murderer, George Joseph Smith.

Its rise, to which I shall refer again in the next few following paragraphs, has been a little over three-quarters of a century in Europe, but the use of hypnotic influence among human beings has been known and practised throughout the ages. It is a state of things older than our civilization. In fact—much older! Combined with the use of poison, or to apply the modern word Toxicology, over two thousand years B.C. the alchemists, astrologers, and especially the priests of Ancient Egypt practised its powers with great adeptness upon State prisoners condemned to death.

However, as I reiterate, its modern influence did not reach any height in Europe until the advent of Franz Antoine Mesmer. This pioneer of modern hypnotic influence was born at Vienna in 1734, but it is to France we must look for rehabilitation of animal magnetism, where, at Paris, in 1766, he commenced his demonstrations that at the period, focused world-wide attention to his activities.

It is to the past achievements of Mesmer that we still owe the everyday word "mesmerized," a term which is just as well understood as "Hypnotized," its similar expression introduced later, for the first time in this country by the celebrated Doctor Braid of Manchester, who created the modern word "hypnotism."

Think not for one moment these pioneers—who meant well—did not experience contempt and marked hostility to their experiments. Mystery-mongers and quacks was their description! Not so much from the public, but from the different shades of scientific opinion and the medical profession of their time in general.

In fact, Mesmer, towards the evening of his career, was, as a consequence, discredited for the use of the very thing practised to-day. His same crude principles, which now, in the right hands of other clever men, with more modern experience, inventions, and up-to-date apparatus and methods, have turned hypnotism or suggested therapeutics to be a universal boon in the aid of suffering mankind, and to combat the numerous and difficult complaints that affect the human mind.

The Institute of Medical Psychology treated eight

hundred and ninety-three patients last year. About fifteen years ago the Institute was not known. All is brought about by psycho-therapy or other treatments, such as suggestion, either with or without hypnotism, and what is called occupational therapy. Hysteria, obsessions, hallucinations, hypochondria and neurasthenia are the nervous complaints the Institute deals with all the year round. In fact eleven children last year arrived to be cured of stealing, four being sent home cured, the remainder being at the time of writing still under treatment.

The question as to whether hypnotic suggestion can play a part in the commission of crime has frequently been before the courts in recent years. To this belongs the case of Eyraud and Bompard, who were accused, in 1890, of murdering an employee of the courts named Eyraud. Sacresta, the family doctor of the Bompards, informed the court that he had frequently hypnotized the accused, and Liégeois, who was called as an expert, declared, in opposition to the opinion expressed by other experts, Brouardel, Mortet, and Ballet, that the woman Bompard had committed the crime under the influence of a hypnotic suggestion she had received from her lover Eyraud.

Both of the accused were convicted. Eyraud was executed, and Bompard condemned to twenty years penal servitude, from which she was released after serving thirteen years.

After she came out of prison, Liégeois submitted her to a series of hypnotic experiments, the result of which was to strengthen the opinion he had formed in the first instance.

Although she at first resisted, he finally succeeded in making Bompard, while in the hypnotic state, re-act the scenes in which the crime was originally suggested to her.

For another interesting account of crime, this time removed from murder, I consider the following data well worthy of mention.

“ A few years ago I was called in as an expert in a case of this kind in Germany. A young girl X had

fallen into the clutches of a procuress Y, who gave spiritualistic séances and who drove the girl to prostitution and crime by means of automatic (?) writing.

"The woman Y used to write down the commands of the spirits, and a number of documents were expounded minutely detailing what X was to do. The seed fell on fruitful ground, for the girl was a spiritualist and, therefore, believed that she was bound to do all that the spirits ordered.

"Y was greatly assisted by the artistic ambition of the girl, who had been trained as a singer. Fame, honour and riches were promised the girl if she would only obey the spirits' commands. The girl consequently became intimate with all kinds of men, and Y always took the money. Finally X took a black-mailing letter to the man who had first seduced her. That letter was also instigated by Y. Similarly X let herself be induced to attempt to procure abortion, to be guilty of breach of contract etc., at the instigation of the spirits.

"This uncanny influence, as we must call it, that Y exerted over the girl X, caused many people to think of hypnotic influence, particularly in respect to the spiritualistic séances.

"X's own father finally gave information to the police, so as to release his daughter from the overwhelming influence of the woman Y, but careful consideration of all the circumstances of the case gave no ground for considering the girl had been hypnotised; it was rather the superstitious tendencies of an obviously nervous girl being artfully utilized by a procuress for her own gain."

There are many other criminal actions in which the possibility of hypnotic suggestion having played a part has been discussed.

This happened some years ago in the charge of murder brought against two men in Kansas named Gray and Macdonald. Gray, who found a certain Patton an irksome witness in a case in which he was interested,

artfully induced Macdonald to murder Patton by representing the latter to be an enemy of his, Macdonald's.

Macdonald was acquitted, but Gray was condemned to death. It was frequently urged at the time in the Press that hypnotic influence or suggestion had been employed, though, in reality, the case was of a totally different nature. The court did not accept the plea of hypnotic suggestion, but assumed that another kind of influence had been brought into play.

My authority for these three accounts is again Doctor Albert Moll, from a chapter referring to this particular side of my subject entitled "The Legal Aspect of Hypnotism."

CHAPTER XIX

My own experience in the field of hypnotic influence—some strange demonstrations I have seen. The case of a well-known healing expert. Some works, plays and films upon the subject. Miracles and the question of hypnotism. Mention of a few great names in the field of hypnotic suggestion.

I HAVE, in my time, seen some remarkable cases in which the state of hypnosis has rendered a subject entirely under the will and control of the hypnotiser.

At Etaples, in France, during the War, I saw an Australian soldier several times demonstrate his powers upon other willing soldiers with most convincing proof.

He was a gaunt type of man, with thick black bushy eyebrows and had a pair of orbs light blue in colour. The gaze of his eyes when concentrated upon your own was uncanny, no doubt due to the fact that they were sunk deep in his head and surrounded by long, thick black lashes. A very uncommon physical peculiarity ! This appearance of his eyes accentuated the gaze, if he so willed, to a piercing glare when he contracted his forehead, so that when his eyebrows came down it was for all the world like staring into a shining pair of blue slits of fire. This man had learnt to develop his power of hypnosis, and by holding your eyes for a few seconds, could render you more or less sensitive to his control. I have seen him on different occasions hypnotize about a dozen different men, each one, in his own particular style, being of a fine masculine type with a will and way of his own that was characteristically Australian. I emphasize this fact as our Overseas soldiers were noted for their manliness, yet to the amazement and good humour of all the onlookers, this self-same lanky Australian would make his fellow-countrymen—when

under control—do the most impossible and ridiculous things at his bidding.

He made one sergeant go down and kiss the boots of a private. Another sergeant he made reveal all his money that was hidden in a belt round his waist. Two more men he made recite, sing, dance. A particular man he sent to the nearby Field Service Canteen to buy a dozen packets of cigarettes and bring them back to him for distribution. He suggested to one man he was the Field Marshal and told him to take the salute as the troops were on review. This Australian did as he was bid, standing in the one position for over a quarter of an hour, and every few moments raising his hand as an acknowledgment of salute to the imaginary troops marching past his front.

There was not the slightest doubt about the genuineness of his demonstrations. I saw many of his voluntary performances, and was—in spite of myself—convinced that this particular Australian possessed real hypnotic powers.

When he de-controlled his subject from the hypnotic trance he had “willed” him into, which is known as “waking from hypnosis” or “dehypnotization,” he would bring it about by a sharp command: “Wake up!” and a few passes of his hand in an outward circular motion in front of the man’s eyes. The subject coming to consciousness as though waking from a sleep.

In not one case did any man hypnotized recall a thing that had happened.

For support of my own experiences in the field of hypnotic investigation, a Sunday newspaper in serial form ran the account of a similar type of person, claiming powers of strong animal magnetism. I quote, however, an account from another newspaper, February 24th, 1935, which runs as follows:

“The little man with piercing eyes—a man who, though more than seventy, has the physique of a comparative youngster of thirty—told me last night that he knew the secret of being able to live to be 120 and still die ‘young.’”

" And that is not the only secret of this remarkable mystic. He can :

" Cure your headache over the telephone ;

" Make it impossible for you to push a needle into his leg ;

" Hypnotize with ease in ten seconds, making the subject unable to speak or move without his permission.

" Stop his own pulse beating, and at will drain the blood from one hand to the other.

" Nor do the accomplishments of the mystic stop here. He told me last night that he has made the lame walk, the paralysed move, and the deaf hear.

" ' Not by a miracle,' he said. ' There is no such thing as a miracle. I cured them by suggestive therapeutics.

" ' Any person cured in this way was never sick. He only thought he was. That is why I can cure a headache over the telephone.'

" He Hypnotized Me.

" The mystic's life story sounds like the most imaginative fiction—he has lived as an Arab, as a Buddhist monk in a Tibetan monastery, has been a general in a South American army, and travelled to every part of the globe.

" His powers and gifts are baffling and fantastic. He offers to submit to any test.

" He knows the secrets of Buddhism and Yogi. He can quickly hypnotize.

" In ten seconds he had me in a state in which I could not move, could not open my mouth, could not remember my name, and could not speak until he gave the order.

" Although he is not a spiritualist he has psychic gifts. He asked me to think of someone I knew who was dead.

" Though I did not reveal the name, the mystic said it for me. He gave me a small piece of paper which I held rolled up in my hand, and he told me things about my dead friend I had forgotten. He waved his left hand about. His right hand remained powerless.

“ ‘There is something cramped about your friend’s writing,’ he said. ‘Hold a pencil to that paper. Hold it in the tips of your fingers. . . . Now open it.’

“ ‘When I opened it there was written the name of my friend as he used to write it—with his left hand. He was born without a right hand.

“ *Living to be 120.*

“ ‘Look at me!’ he said. ‘Is not my body that of a young man? You may strike me in the body as hard as you wish. You cannot hurt me. I can cut off the blood from any part of my body at will.

“ ‘And yet I never did a single physical exercise in my life. I train my body with my mind.

“ ‘*What are the secrets of living to be 120? Before you get out of bed stretch as you see a cat stretch, relax all the nerve centres in the joints. Practise slow and deep breathing.*

“ ‘Man takes sixteen breaths a minute and lives seventy years. A rabbit takes seventy-five breaths a minute and lives eight years. A turtle takes one breath in every five minutes and lives one hundred and fifty years.’

“ ‘He told me that for years he has practised breathing eight times a minute.

“ ‘Then you must diet,’ he said. ‘I am a vegetarian, because I am convinced that man was not intended to be a carnivorous animal.

“ ‘A fourth secret lies in sleep. Every night I bathe my feet and legs in hot water. I send warm blood coursing from my legs to my heart.

“ ‘Instead of having the strain of feeding my legs while I sleep my heart is rested.

“ ‘A fifth secret is a philosophy which makes it impossible to take anything seriously, eliminating hate, fear, greed, or desire.

“ ‘If you are conscious of doing work you tire and must rest. I am not conscious of work, therefore I never tire.’ ”

Hypnotism has not been without its votaries in literature and also upon the stage.

The strangest thing to my mind being that of the work of Ben Jonson's comedy, *The Magnetic Lady*. It was written and produced over a hundred years before Mesmer or Braid were ever thought of, whereas Shakespeare and our other immortals have never referred to it, the great Stratford-on-Avon genius only dealing with Occultism or Spiritism in his plays like *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, etc.

Dumas and Balzac, however, did write upon the subject. The former in *Corsican Brothers*, the latter in *Ursule Merouet*, but both great French writers were in the time of Mesmer, which is altogether different from the period of Ben Jonson's play. However, there is no doubt that the great work written by George du Maurier, entitled *Trilby*, caused most stir of all over the world, and can readily be accepted as the greatest masterpiece of all time for an outstanding example of what is meant by the powers of hypnotism.

The late Sir Rider Haggard, in his novel *Cleopatra*, also gives a fine account of hypnotism, and so does Sardou's *Sorcière*, a play in which the late Sarah Bernhardt used to appear.

A film wherein the process of auto-suggestion and the theme of hypnotism run very strongly was one just recently displayed by The Paramount Company of Hollywood, in which Sir Guy Standing and Mr. Robert Halliday were cast in the two most outstanding parts.

It was a picturization, in the eyes of the watching audience witnessing this film, of the elucidation, by hypnotic influence, of an innocent man arrested for murder.

In the opinion of many, it was the greatest film of this type that so far has ever been produced. True, it was fiction! But it had the master touch about it that made a terribly difficult subject so simple to understand that the most commonplace imagination could easily appreciate the deep significance which ran through the picture. I refer to the film entitled *The Witching Hour*. With regard to the variety stage, there have been many demonstrators of a kind, but

the most famous of all was Doctor Wilfred Bodey. I have seen him display his powers many times—often to audiences packed with hostile medical students. My opinion remains the same, irrespective of all said and done. He was a superlatively clever man on animal magnetism, hypnotism, and psycho-therapy. In fact, he was a great performer! which I think is an honest tribute from only one of his hundreds of thousands of admirers.

With regard to miracles, some of which have played a part in the mysteries of the Catholic Church, auto-suggestion, in the field of hypnotism, has been advanced by many shades of scientific thought for these phenomena.

I refer to stigmatization or bleeding of the skin. It was first observed in Francis of Assisi in places upon the body which corresponded to the wounds of Christ, but the best known case was that of Louise Lateau, of Bois d'Haine, near Mons, in 1868.

This pious girl, in a conscious state, exhibited the five wounds of the Saviour, from which real drops of blood oozed from the skin. A great scientific investigator named Gombault considered it a supernatural process.

I quote *Moll* with the exact words, translated from German, of the two great scientific experts of the time reporting upon this phenomenon.

"Gombault is opposed to Surbled, who, like himself, did not admit the physical origin of stigmatization, but, nevertheless, thought that although a scientific explanation is still wanting, the future may well be expected to supply one. Such a standpoint, which is in itself thoroughly logical, Gombault considers mistaken; he thinks that if stigmatization cannot be explained in the present day, for that very reason the view that it is of supernatural origin is the only one that is warranted."

In the year of grace, 1935, sixty-seven years later, science, with all its knowledge, has given us no further answer.

In conclusion we can admit this fact about the proof

of hypnotism : that in 1884 no English doctor had a word good enough in its support. In fact, in drafting the Prospectus to the Society for Psychical Research, 1882, it is described as a "debatable phenomenon," but to-day it is recognized by all medical men the world over. No doubt this is due not only to the later pioneers in this country—for there must always be such men—from Mesmer and Braid onwards, but also to the experimental writings of such great names as Edmund Gurney and Frederic Myers, as well as to the hypnotic suggestion in medical practice by Dr. Milne Bramwall, Dr. Lloyd Tuckey and other members of the Society.

CHAPTER XX

"Psychic" phenomena. Strange incidents of the common word of "luck." Miss Gene Dennis—this remarkable young American woman's powers of the psychic. Some accounts and descriptions. Her activities in the No 1. Brighton Trunk Crime.

ARE there people who can cast an influence over the lives of other persons? Can certain places do the same thing? This is a question which is eternally being discussed; I have heard it mentioned over and over again throughout my experiences.

As an instance of what I mean it is best for me to mention, in support of this opinion, the views expressed upon the subject from the pens of other human beings. This account is again quoted from the Press.

The title reads:

"It was 3000 years old, but tragedy and misfortune followed it even in Modern London."

"Early in December, 1926, when I was manager of a large London firm, I was on my way to lunch when, passing through one of the smaller offices next to the dining-room, I saw a face which appeared to be staring at me from the other side of the room. I found it to be a carved face such as are to be seen on old Egyptian coffins and sarcophagi.

"After carefully examining it I decided that, at whatever angle it was placed, its eyes appeared always to be looking at me. I went to the dining-room, but the face had so affected and fascinated me that, several times during the lunch, I was drawn, as if willed to do so, to inspect the face again.

"The clerk in whose office I found the face explained that, just before the lunch-hour, he had had to visit the boiler house and whilst there the fireman was

in the act of throwing the face into the furnace. The clerk rescued it.

"I was so intrigued by its appearance that I had it placed in my own office.

Several weeks passed ; then one day our accountant visited the works and, on entering my office, was so struck by the face that he suggested getting in touch with the British Museum. This was done, and the head of the Egyptian Department offered to examine it. It was packed by a clerk and taken to the British Museum by my chauffeur. The Museum described it as a coffin-face, made probably about 1000 B.C.

"I then tried to find out how the face had come to be in the factory at all, and a most curious and tragic story was unfolded. . . .

"A foreman in the factory had bought it for 1s. from a German publican in 1915 and had brought it to the factory. The German had bought it from a man who had travelled widely in his younger days. This man was then of good means, but in later years he lost much money and was forced to sell many of his travelling curios. The German, in his turn, was assaulted by an angry mob during the war, his home was broken up, and he himself interned.

"Some time after he bought the face, the foreman's daughter and her two little children met the most violent and tragic deaths, and his son attempted suicide.

"Later, the father-in-law of the clerk who rescued it from the furnace committed suicide ; and one of the proprietors of the firm, a strong and healthy man, was killed instantly in a machinery accident. One of the girls on the staff who had appeared interested in the face was seriously hurt in a railway accident, whilst the man who had kept it under his bench had a long run of bad luck, and so did the clerk who packed it up for the Museum. The chauffeur who took it had a very bonny and healthy little girl, but within a few days of the face being delivered she died.

"On Christmas Eve, 1926, I was relating all this to a family party and saying how, so far, I had escaped; but on the following evening I met with a serious accident and was in bed for a considerable period.

"Now all who had come in contact with the face had, in some way or other, suffered some misfortune; but, apart from the personal aspect, the factory itself had experienced for some years a very slack and unprosperous period. Yet, as soon as the face had been disposed of, orders came pouring in and the output for the following year was considerably increased over the previous year.

"From 'Manager,' London, S.W.1.

"(This reader, who requested us to omit his name for personal reasons, enclosed the correspondence with the British Museum and other corroborative information to the editor of the paper.)"

For another example to the pages of *John Bull*, June 23rd, 1934, from the pen of that well-known writer, Mr. Andrew Soutar, the famous novelist. His title reads:

"Under a Hoodoo—the most baffling mystery of our everyday lives."

"It is all very well to smile down your nose and talk superciliously about the 'superstition of the ignorant.' All right. Call me ignorant if you will, but I do believe in what is described as a hoodoo.

"And I shall presently advance a theory that may startle you into writing a letter to your bishop—or the police!

"I was never more sincere in my life.

"We speak glibly about 'good luck' and 'bad luck.' Even the Church uses the expression. If there is such a quality as good luck, or bad luck, how can you pooh-pooh the suggestion of a hoodoo?

"All life moves in cycles. Seven years. There comes a period in your life when everything seems to go wrong and you cannot ascribe a reason. You have conformed

to every known conventionality ; you have played the game (let's put it in simple language).

" But one trouble succeeds another, the whole world is out of joint as far as you are concerned. Death, tragedy, financial disaster ! They seem to gather themselves together so that they may break your spirit to the surrender. You set your back against the wall, but it is of no avail. Friends say to you, easily and carelessly : ' Think of Job, old man ! He got out of his troubles in the end.'

" Sympathy is so cheap—isn't it ?

" The closer you examine the circumstances the more perplexed you become. What's the cause of it all ?

There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

" *Disaster descends.*

" When plague and pestilence affected the native tribes of old, the witch-doctors were called into conference. They came to the conclusion that there was some member of the tribe whose existence was inimical to the community as a whole.

" The devil was exorcised ! We, with our superior intelligence, called those witch-doctors pagans.

" What do we say of the Christus when he came into the country of the Gadarenes, cast out the unclean spirit that was torturing the mind and body of man, and transferred it to the swine ?

" Some years ago I went very closely into this problem of good luck and bad luck. In a certain country district in the North I made friends of the farmers. They were prosperous. The seasons were good, life was good. Then, one day, another farmer arrived in the district.

" From that day the era of prosperity began to wane. In two years, one farmer lost the whole of his capital. The crops failed. Stock died off. He came to me one night and there was a revolver in his coat pocket. He was certain that the new arrival was responsible for the bad luck.

" Another man took that farm, a highly intelligent

fellow, who knew his profession from belly to boots, as the saying goes. Within six months he was declared bankrupt. Three other farms became derelict.

"And men in other walks of life also stumbled into disaster.

"In one house there was illness, strange noises in the dead of the night, uncanny footsteps climbing up and down the stairs, mysterious whisperings. The maid-servants wouldn't stand it; they left—there was horror in their eyes. Financial affairs went wrong. One couldn't do anything right.

"There was a hoodoo in the district. I don't mind telling you that I myself experienced a series of misfortunes for the origin of which there was no accounting.

"Then I began to trace the history of the new arrival in the district. I was satisfied that association with him was sufficient to account for the dark cloud that had settled on what was formerly a prosperous community.

"At last, driven to desperation, I quitted the district and the sun burst through the clouds immediately: I felt a wave of relief sweep over me as I motored away for the last time.

"Now for my theory!

"Have you ever been in a crowded room and marked the entrance of a man or woman whose very entering seemed to clarify the atmosphere and make you feel happier? That's personality. Have you ever been horribly depressed by the entrance of someone, a complete stranger to you?

"*Murderous thoughts.*

"There is a type of man and woman which exudes malevolence. They need not speak or make any physical action. They spread disaster by their very presence in the locality.

"*They kill with their thoughts!*

"When I have been arguing along these lines, people have said to me that my theory is fantastical. I reply that radio—broadcasting—has completely modified the whole of my scepticism in relation to most problems.

You are sitting alone in your study. You become depressed for no reason that occurs to you. Or you become elated. You can't hear the sounds that are coming through the ether and the walls, but they are there. If they could be amplified—if your aural faculties could be intensified—you would hear them.

"And sub-consciously those voices and sounds depress you or elate you.

"Job, of course, is a classic example of courage, but what are we to do about these other disseminators of 'bad luck'? The witch doctors in pagan times had a word for it, but we mustn't repeat it or we shall get into trouble.

"Now, let me infuse just a word or two of cheeriness into this depressing theory of mine.

"In this life we have to take the rough with the smooth. Courage is the first and most commendable of human qualities. Luck may run crookedly for a period, but if you beat down the feeling that you are 'marked'—if you shut your ears to those whisperings of despair that come over your shoulder in the darkness—if you switch off the invisible, the noiseless radio in your room, you will come out on top. 'All you can say about luck,' said Bret Harte in one of his greatest stories, 'is that it's bound to change.'

"I believe in it.

"And, finally, I would tell you to read again those words of Cassius when he was inciting the noble Brutus to rebel against Cæsar :

Men at some time are masters of their fates—
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves that we are underlings.

"Yes, I believe in the Hoodoo, as it is called. And I believe that I am right in my theory about its origin.

"And what do you mean when you speak of suicide by suggestion?

"And what is meant by that Americanism: 'Brother, you've given me a happy thought'?"

Now having said something in regard to "inexplicable circumstances" governing the usual humdrum

tenor of life, I come back once again to the theme of my subject mentioned in the early chapters of this book in fact the first opening paragraph: "Is there a place in future police criminal investigation department of the world for the clairvoyant?"

Judging by the unusual and extraordinary psychic gifts of a young modern American girl at the time of writing, on tour round all our principal variety halls throughout the kingdom, I should lean to the opinion that such a phase in criminal investigation of the near future is possible. In this direction, if such a thing does ever come to pass, I unhesitatingly place as one of its first pioneers Miss Gene Dennis.

This unaffected, charming young woman has been described as the psychic marvel of the age, as well as the "most amazing mind in the world." Famous scientists, psychologists, statesmen, business executives, artists, stage and screen personalities have interviewed Miss Dennis and marvelled at her powers, to say nothing of the millions of lesser folk who, at her countless theatrical appearances, have been amazed and stunned by her strange insight into the most inner recesses of their minds.

Just what is this strange faculty that Miss Dennis possesses? This super-power that sky-rocketed her in the span of a few years from an obscure Kansas farm girl to the position of the most famous mind and character-reader living. What is the source of the insight that enabled her to tell Professor Einstein details of his work which he admitted afterwards no one but himself could possibly know? What is it that gives Miss Dennis a welcome entry into the homes of the great and famous—that has even taken her to the White House, where she was consulted by President Hoover and Roosevelt?

Millions of people in all walks of life have tested her strange genius, but no one has fully understood her remarkable powers—even Miss Dennis herself cannot explain. To quote Miss Dennis' own words: "I do not know what I am. I mean this being able to know and tell things about people's intimate problems.

You can call it what you like, but all I know is that when people ask me questions, certain answers come to me and because the answers have usually been correct, I achieved fame. Of course I have been called everything—a possessor of 'Fourth Dimensional Thought'—'A person with a Sixth Sense'—'A Human Radio'—but usually, though, people are content to call me 'psychic' and let it go at that.

"As far as I can see, the term 'psychic' covers a multitude of marvels and maybe it covers me too. I have been examined by psychologists at some of America's largest Universities and there is just one description of my faculty which sticks in my mind. It was the description given by a man who had more to do with my career than perhaps any other person. The curious thing about it is he started out to expose me as a fraud—and ended up by making me famous. That man is Dr. David Abbott, a student of every phase of magic and the supernatural. It was Dr. Abbott who invented many of the contrivances which the most famous magicians used in their tricks, and it was Dr. Abbot who wrote several widely known books exposing the methods and systems used by clairvoyants and others performing so-called psychological feats. He claimed that there was no one boasting possession of such powers he could not expose.

"I can truthfully say I was not going around boasting as I was only fourteen and I had very little interest in my natural ability. But anyway Dr. Abbott started out to 'expose me.' He said he could do it in fifteen minutes. However, I stayed at his home not fifteen minutes but four weeks. When I left I went away with this benediction from Dr. Abbott: 'Gene, you have God-given ability.' Those words have often comforted me in times of stress. I want to say as I repeat them now I have no more intention of being sacriligious than Dr. Abbot had when he first uttered them—it was not so much what he said as how he said it. It is good to know that a person believes in you, especially when that person is a sceptic of sceptics. You can imagine how

his confidence inspired a frightened little girl who hardly knew what it was all about."

In regard to psychometry very few clairvoyants or students of the psychic have assisted the police in this country upon a case of murder elucidation. The few outstanding instances that have come to my notice are mentioned in previous chapters, but in America a great number of cases are upon record in which this factor has played a most prominent part.

Regarding this aspect, Miss Dennis is known throughout the United States by all the prominent police departments for many remarkable psychic feats that have helped them to unravel crime, when all other efforts have proved unsuccessful. In this country also she has figured, once in a recent notorious crime of murder, as well as in another glaring case of fraud and imposture where her name was mentioned, in which the perpetrator was sent away for a term of penal servitude.

I shall refer to her part in the recent English case of murder after mentioning a few more facts about this remarkable "psychic" exponent obtained from American sources.

In a fishing town of Washington a child and the father had been missing for several months; their disappearance was one of the unsolved mysteries of that vicinity.

The mayor of the little town, learning that Miss Dennis was spending a short vacation near there, asked her help, hoping she might give some clue that would lead to the discovery of the missing pair.

She did. Her suggestion was that a search be made in a neglected cove near the village. It was done,—and resulted in the two bodies being found. Another mystery solved.

What is the faculty or force that enables any mortal to pierce the wall of mystery and disclose hidden facts? Is it something supernatural or can science account for the strange phenomenon?

The question was put to a well-known scientist at Columbia University who made a study of Miss

Dennis and some of the amazing things she was able to do.

"To-day," he said, "the science of psychology and the developments in psychical research have given us scarcely more than an ocean of half-truths and concepts which clutter up the mind and impede any really constructive and enlightening effort to determine its possibilities. We still wait for a Newton or Galileo to define its mysteries.

"During the last eighty years the concerted endeavours of various Psychological Research Societies have done much to fathom the unknown causes and forces,—such as are displayed by Miss Dennis.

"Scientists like Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Wm. Crooks, Alfred Russell Wallace, Lombrose, and others have given much study to examples of unexplainable phenomena.

"Similar examples of this little known force are recorded in the pages of the world's history since the days of ancient Rome and Greece."

"Similar to the unusual things that are done by Miss Dennis?"

"Quite similar happenings are referred to by the great philosophers before and after Plato and down to to-day.

"There is the famous test case, related by Herodotus. Appollonius of Tyana, who at Ephesus sees clairvoyantly the assassination of Damitian at Rome,—hundreds of miles away. He cries out suddenly: 'Strike down the tyrant.' It is learned later that the tyrant is killed at almost precisely the moment he spoke. The materialists of those days, just as the ones of our own age cannot explain it. The sceptics of those days and we of to-day refuse to give credit to the facts we see and hear with our own senses."

He was asked: "Then there are persons who possess true psychic powers?"

"Certainly. Huxley, Tyndall, Lord Kelvin, Dryson, and others of scientific knowledge, assert that such force does exist in a few rare individuals, but even they do not definitely analyse it."

"Can it be explained,—or is there any example you can give that the average person will understand?"

"The true psychic is eclectic in nature. Hence not all who come in contact with him or her will vibrate to the thought or magnetic impulses that are given out or received. Just as certain metals, certain chemicals, and acids have their affinities.

"A concrete case is the one of Miss Dennis's own tests. It is known that if an object is brought to some peculiarly constructed person, whom for a better name we call a psychic,—that the person can tell something of the person who used the object or from whence it came. She is given a piece of fossilized rock—an ancient carving—and tells its origin and history.

"She handles the object, making the mind passive and quiet as possible—then names and mental pictures come to the mind. It is mysterious, but so also is the homing instinct of a pigeon or dog or cat that comes home after being taken miles in a closed car or box."

"It is not possible that you were thinking of its history and she read your mind?" was a sceptical question.

"Possibly such thought-vibrations are responsible,—though the experimenter was not conscious of thinking of the history of the carving at the time. Nevertheless the results obtained and the facts are indisputable and unexplainable except by vibrations.

"In reality this force is analogous to the receptive plates of the telephone. Electric impulses,—not the voice as many erroneously believe—carry along the wire, being reconverted into words again when they reach the sensitive plate at the receiving end of the line.

"To-day it is an accepted belief by men of science that mental impulses can be thrown off and picked out of the ether by certain sensitive brain mechanisms—just as radio waves are picked up and filtered through the tubes of your radio set. The psychic mind in this case is comparable to the tube,—which amplifies the impulses so that its owner can convert them into word or sound. As a matter of fact the development of radio

has taught us and led us to further beliefs in metaphysics."

The scientific gentleman came nearer than any other to solving the riddle of Gene Dennis. At least he admits the existence of persons who are capable of accomplishing the seemingly miraculous things which she does.

Next the question is put to Gene herself.

"How do you do it,—and why?—And for how long have you known of this unusual faculty which has brought you fame and—so we are informed,—quite a tidy fortune?"

Miss Dennis' very appearance and manner is contrary to every preconceived idea of what a psychic should be. One rather expects to meet a woman of exotic or mystic personality. Perhaps one of piercing eye, dominating, stern, and serious looking, surrounded by peculiar people and reeking Oriental atmosphere.

Nothing could be further from the real Gene Dennis.

If she were met in the drawing-room of one of the matrons of society she would be thought a charming young *débutante*. Quite unassuming and, thankfully, lacking the ultra-modern veneer of the usual *débutante* which serves as sophistication.

She is tall, and strong-looking, with dark hair and eyes and a charming smile that discloses perfect teeth. If there is an affected or unnatural action or mannerism that she has, it is well concealed.

She repeats the question.

"How do I do what I do,—and why?"

"The first part of the question is difficult. The latter part quite simple, so I'll answer it first.

"For almost nine years I've been appearing in theatres and at private affairs giving demonstrations of my—so I am told—psychic powers, because I've made it a profession, just as a musician or a doctor or lawyer has his profession. Also, like the other professional people, I appreciate and can find use for the emoluments I derive from it.

"That I believe answers the last half of the question.

"How I am able to see and feel things that others do not sense is something I cannot fathom. I've had the ability since I was a child three or four years old. Even then I surprised my family and neighbours by telling things of which I was supposed to have no knowledge. Nor did I obtain it in the usual and natural manner.

"When asked questions, certain answers come to me. That they are right a vast number of times makes me different. When someone gives me an object—perhaps something that has belonged to another, something foreign or strange, or a letter from another person, I immediately feel—let us call it—waves of vibrations that to me spell out names,—if it's names I want. Perhaps I have mental pictures of scenes connected with the object or the person. Because these pictures and scenes, or the names I tell, are correct, I am an enigma."

"Can you do it with everyone, or do certain persons and certain objects affect you differently?" was the next question.

"Do not certain persons affect you differently?" was the questioning answer. The reply was: Yes,—most decidedly so.

"The same with me. A person in the theatre will ask some personal question. Psychologists will tell you that a student of character might be able to answer or even foretell something for that person by his appearance, his manner, and the nature of his question. But I can't be explained that way, for the reason that I frequently do not see the person clearly. A sort of haze comes into my eyes. Sometimes colours, and they are indicative of certain things which I can tell quite easily."

"Then the names and scenes come to you?"

"Occasionally,—or perhaps I should say frequently. So frequently that in the last nine years I have received tens of thousands of letters from persons whose questions I have answered—thanking me for telling them things they wanted to know. Apparently I have been of some help to them."



Miss Gene Dennis.

The remarkable American psychic demonstrator, who figured in the
"No. 1 Brighton Trunk" murder investigation.

"When asked to aid in investigating a crime, what is the first thing you do?"

"Before you ask that question let me say that I do not have any idea what I will do or what will develop. Each individual situation is a separate case. And they are so different and the circumstances surrounding each are so varied that if we are to go into crime cases it will be a long story."

Then admitting that I had some data on crime mysteries she had solved she said that it would serve as well as anything she could tell me.

"I cannot tell you how I do the—seemingly extraordinary things I do. All I can say is, that throughout the country there are innumerable cases and facts to verify that I have that unusual gift which scientists call psychic power.

"Just one thing I can add. My gift is nothing supernatural. Just supernormal, which in itself makes me different. But I'm not too awe-inspiring or uncanny or too forbidding,—am I?"

I find writing my books from true life an intensely interesting subject, but at the same time a very, very hard one! Dearth of data and research as well as a control of imagination, being the main difficulties.

In the first place, the times of which I am writing are too near to the period in which we live for such information to be recorded, unless it be in the news accounts of the everyday Press, or other restricted sources which as a rule are not available. Regarding the second point: true life will not permit of sensational style or technique, the *powerful weapons* of many successful authors of fiction; for no reader of intelligence will stand for such arts in the chronicling of accounts which are read as recorded happenings of the times more or less in which we live. Interest must, of course, be maintained, but above all, authenticity for the facts and subject which are taken as serious or true. This is why, my reader, in a work of the kind you have before you, I am compelled to quote from time to time sources and accounts to bear out my subject. That is why I am

now mentioning the first extensive crime report that has appeared in this country, one in which the "psychic," clairvoyance, or psychometry have been enlisted upon the side of murder investigation.

Who knows? In fifty years hence this account of mine might be quoted as a first-class instance of mention in this country; not so much upon the spiritualistic side or again upon the side of modern "psychic" investigation, but rather more as a first experiment of the "psychic" being resorted to upon the side of our police as a possible aid to scientific crime investigation.

This is how a well-known Sunday paper of June 24th, 1934, for the first time upon a big scale in this country, reported the activities of Miss Gene Dennis concerning her intuitive premonitions of the "No. 1 Brighton Trunk Crime" murder case:

"House with stained floorboards. From our special correspondent. Brighton. Saturday.

"Miss Dennis spent three-quarters of an hour with the officers in charge of the investigation of the murder.

"The information she gave them was sufficiently valuable for them to make enquiries on the lines she suggested.

"The police agreed that if this information was verified they would allow her to hold some of the cord with which the body was bound.

"Man with bushy hair.

"I know I can help the police if they will let me," Miss Dennis told me.

"If they give me some of the cord or paper in which the remains were wrapped, I think I could give them a very good idea as to the identity of the girl."

"When she left the police station Miss Dennis said that the police officers regarded her statement with care.

"I know that some of the suggestions I made impressed them considerably," she said.

"Worked in seed store.

"I suggested that they should look for a man with

dark brown hair. His initials are either G. A. or G. H. Probably his name is George, and he is about thirty-six.

“ ‘They will find him in London or Southampton, I cannot say definitely which.

“ ‘*When I think of the man the word “Midlands” comes repeatedly to my mind.*

“ ‘He may be in the Midlands, or he may have some connection with that part.

“ ‘He is a man of an artistic type, with long slim hands and bushy hair.

“ ‘He is not a murderer by type. He has been forced into it. He has worked in a wholesale seed store.

“ ‘I told them that the brown paper mentioned in the case was originally used for wrapping up tyres.’

“Girl from Lancashire.

“ ‘The girl has blue eyes, with nice brown hair.

“ ‘*She came from Lancashire. She is 5 ft. 8½ in. in height, and I imagine she is a manicurist. I can see her working in a white overall.*

“ ‘Her feet are well kept, because they were looked after at the beauty parlour where she worked.

“ ‘I told them to search their list of missing girls for one with the name of Dorothy Ellena Mason, or something like Mason, and I suggested that the crime was committed on a boat, and the police treated this with interest.

“ ‘I think it was a boat that was moored near Brighton. There is a toll-bridge and a railway nearby. I cannot be certain, however.

“ ‘I told them that the man’s name was George Henrieson or Robinson.

“ ‘*If I only had a piece of the cord I could say more definitely.*

“ ‘The police are very interested in my toll-bridge theory. I understand they are working on it.

“ ‘They will follow up the suggestions I have made, and if they prove at all correct, they will allow me to hold the string that was used to tie up the body.’

“Car Number Clue. Police Search in Empty Bungalows.”

" "I can reveal that if the clues now being followed up with the greatest optimism by the police prove productive the officers will be faced with a problem almost as difficult as any they have yet encountered.

" "For while the police have reason to believe that they have a very definite clue to the identity of the man concerned in the crime, they are still without the slightest indication of the identity of the woman.

" *"It is possible that if the murderer—for the police are satisfied that he can be nothing else—is arrested, he will, like Rouse, be charged with murdering an unknown person."*

On the following Sunday this account was published, written by Miss Gene Dennis.

" *Young Man With Glassy Eyes.*

" *Miss Gene Dennis, who has had several consultations with the police concerning the unsolved mystery of Brighton Trunk Crime No. 1, made a dramatic statement to the Sunday Despatch last night.*

" *She gave a description of the murderer, described the scene of the crime, and also gave a clue to the identity of the victim.*

" And she is convinced that another mutilated body is hidden and will soon be discovered.

" During the past ten days I have been filled with a terrible fear for some poor girl whom I feel is even now in an awful peril," Miss Dennis said.

" My mind is now clear on No. 1 trunk murder.

" When I first visited the police at Brighton I was muddled.

" I knew that two crimes had been committed, and it seemed all the time as though two pictures were imprinting themselves on my subconscious mind at the same time.

" With the scanty material at my disposal it was impossible to separate the two crimes completely.

" Now I ask the police to listen to what I am telling them, because I feel it is correct.

" The whole thing came vividly to me last night.

" *The man who committed Trunk Crime No. 1 is young,*

dark-haired, and smallish. He has peculiar glassy eyes, which I could recognize if I could only meet him.

"He has strong fingers with strangely flat tips, caused by hard work. He is very hairy and is covered with tattoo marks.

"He is smartly dressed, though he has little money. He has worked on ships for a long time. I think he has probably been engaged in loading or unloading small ships.

"It doesn't seem to me that he has ever been far to sea, mostly round the coast or up canals.

"A Drug Pedlar.

"This man has certainly been engaged in some form of drug peddling. I attach the utmost importance to this ; it will prove to be the vital link.

"All along I have known that this crime was not committed in a lonely place. At first I thought it was a nursing home or public institutuon ; now that I have my mind in order I feel that the crime took place in a house with a bad reputation.

"This house is under the control of a middle-aged woman with a sad face. She knows all about this affair, but is terrified to speak.

"As I have said before, this man was a sex maniac.

"Tortured Girl.

"This is how I feel that the crime was committed.

"The girl was married, but had left her husband and was staying at this house with this man. She had been nagging him.

"I do not think he attached any importance to the fact that she was to become a mother. I dare not think too deeply about how he killed her, it was one of the most fiendish crimes ever perpetrated.

"The man was a pure sadist maniac. He must have tortured the miserable girl horribly before he took her life.

"I can hear her crying and hysterical. There is terrible misery surrounding this scene.

"The police must concentrate on every house of the type in or near Brighton, because that is where it happened.

"They must try to find this middle-aged woman who runs it because she could tell them everything.

"If they want to find the victim they should confine their enquiries to married women who have left their husbands.

"She is brown-haired and of delicate build. Information which would help to identify her will be found in a hairdresser's or beauty parlour.

"But above all, let them remember the urgency of finding this fiend. I say in all sincerity that no girl is safe till he is found.

"He is a maniac, and kills for the joy of inflicting pain on his victim.

"I am writing this in the hope that it will help the police and the public to identify the man."

"True Prophecies.

"Gene Dennis, daughter of a Kansas farmer, has astonished the world by her powers.

"A month ago she wrote: 'The trunk murder is connected in some way with another murder, which, but for this, might never have been discovered.'

"Three weeks ago she wrote:

"Trunk Crime No. 1 was committed by a maniac who mutilated the body horribly.

"The body was wrapped up with adhesive paper."

"Both these statements have since been admitted by the police.

"Seaside Search. Man and Ex-Dance Hostess who Vanished.

"Police investigation into Trunk Crime No. 1—the murder of a young woman whose dismembered body was found at Brighton Station thirty-four days ago—has moved to Shoreham-by-Sea, in Sussex.

"Enquiries were made there yesterday about the disappearance of a young couple from a boat moored in the River Adur.

"A statement has been given to the police by the skipper of the craft and various articles of women's clothing found in the boat are being examined.

"The Shoreham clue has also led to a close search being made of the empty bungalows in the town.

"The couple left the vessel on May 26th, and nothing has been heard of them since.

"A description of the woman, a former dance hostess, is in some respects similar to the victim in the mystery."

CHAPTER XXI

'Psychic phenomenon' or "psychic premonition." The murder of the late Mr. William Terriss. Authentic accounts of a great scientific investigator. A short account of spiritualism. A very short one about black magic.

IT will be remembered that William Terriss, the actor, was stabbed at the entrance to the Adelphi Theatre by a discharged member of the company who fancied that he had a grievance against him.

The murder took place at 7.20 p.m. on December 16th, 1897. On the same evening a member of the company, Miss H——, told some friends of the investigator of the murder and of the dream told to her by a Mr. Lane. Four days later I saw Mr. Lane, who had been acting as understudy to Terriss, and obtained from him the following account :

"From MR. FREDERICK LANE,

"ADELPHI THEATRE,

"December 20th, 1897.

"In the early morning of December 16th, 1897, I dreamt that I saw the late Mr. Terriss lying in a state of delirium or unconsciousness on the stairs leading to the dressing-rooms in the Adelphi Theatre. There were also Miss Millward and one of the footmen who attended the curtain, both of whom I actually saw a few hours later at the death scene. His chest was bare and his clothes torn aside.

"Everybody who was around him was trying to do something for his good. The dream was in the shape of a picture. I saw it like a tableau on which the curtain would rise and fall. I immediately after dreamt that we did not open at the Adelphi Theatre that evening. I was in my dressing-room in the dream,

but this latter part was somewhat incoherent. The next morning on going down to the theatre for rehearsal, the first member of the company I met was Miss H——, to whom I mentioned this dream. On my arrival at the theatre I also mentioned it to some other members of the company, including Messrs. Creagh, Henry, Buxton, Carter Bligh. This dream, though it made such an impression upon me as to cause me to relate it to my fellow artists, did not give me the idea of any coming disaster.

“ I may state that I have dreamt formerly of deaths of relatives and other matters which have impressed me, but the dreams have never impressed me sufficiently to make me repeat them the following morning, and have never been verified. My dream of the present occasion was the most vivid I have ever experienced, in fact, life-like, and exactly represented the scene as I saw it at night.”

Mr. Lane explained to the investigator he was in the neighbourhood of the theatre when Mr. Terriss was stabbed and ran to Charing Cross Hospital for a doctor : on his return he looked in at the private entrance and saw Mr. Terriss lying on the stairs as in a dream.

Miss H—— writes as follows :

“ ADELPHI THEATRE,
“ (*Saturday*) 18th December, 1897.

“ On Thursday morning, about twelve o'clock, I went into Rule's, Maiden Lane, and there found Mr. Lane with Mr. Wade. In the course of conversation after Mr. Wade had left, Mr. Lane said that he had had a curious dream the night before, the effects of which he still felt. It was to this effect : he had seen Terriss on the stairs inside the Maiden Lane door (the spot where Terriss died), and that he was surrounded by a crowd of people, and that he was raving, but he (Mr. Lane) couldn't exactly tell what was the matter. I remember laughing about this, and then we went to rehearsal.”

Mr. Carter Bligh writes :

“ January 4th, 1898.

“ I must apologize for delay in replying to your note. I have much pleasure in being able to state that Mr. Fred Lane, on the morning of the 16th ult., at the rehearsal at the Adelphi Theatre, told me among others in a jocular and chaffing way (not believing in it for an instant) how he would be probably called upon to play ‘ Captain Thomas ’ that night as he had dreamt something serious had happened to Terriss. I forget now, and therefore do not attempt to repeat the exact words Mr. Lane used as to the reason (in the dream) why Mr. Terriss would not appear that night, but I have a distinct recollection of him saying that he (Terriss) could not do so because of his having dreamt that something had happened. It was all passed over very lightly in the same spirit in which it was given, i.e., in the spirit of unbelieving barter.”

Mr. Creagh Henry, another member of the company wrote on January 20th to say that on the morning of December 16th he heard Mr. Lane relate a dream in which he had seen Mr. Terriss “ upon the landing where he died, surrounded by several people who were supporting him in what appeared to be a fit.”

For this account I have no less an authority than one of our great English scientific investigators of the occult. Mr. Frank Podmore, from one of his many works upon the subject, entitled *The Naturalisation of the Supernatural*.

He sums up this strange case as follows :

“ It seems here that the dream vision presented a fairly accurate and detailed picture of the event. The dream was not of a common type and it is difficult to dismiss it as merely a chance coincidence. But neither in this case nor in others is it necessary to suppose that for the seer the veil of the future was momentarily lifted. The lines of telepathic influence, as we have already had occasion to observe, do not seem invariably to be marked out by kinship or affection.

"It would seem possible then that the chief actor in the tragedy (the murderer) brooded in solitude, may have unawares communicated to some mind which happened to be sensitive to its reception, the outline of the picture in which he embodied his desperate purpose. It is to be noted that the percipient in each case have some connection with the locality of the tragedy.

"There are, however, a few well-attested cases in which the coincidence seems too definite to be attributed to chance, while no other solution can apparently be suggested."

The undoubted experience and authority of this learned man describes this phase of things as Clairvoyance and Prevision. But he does not exclude the possibility of some "unknown law" governing its cause. General opinion seems to be uniform that so far, science is groping along upon the right road, but it is pitch dark! Soon there will come a time when this veil will be lifted. Then will be revealed to man much that was thought mysterious, which may possibly belong to the well-defined laws of nature, and our great infinite electric cosmos, of which the universal mind of man is an integral part.

A brief history upon Spiritualism as a kind of reference is, I think, necessary, as well as a few general remarks upon other sides of religion. Spiritualism commenced to grow in this country about 1848. It stands as a "doctrine" or "belief" in intercourse with the spirits of the dead. It must not be confused with the term Spiritism, for this only denotes one particular phase of the "belief" similar to some of the Far East religions. But in Spiritualism it is associated with the name of Allam Kardiak, and is synonymous with many Oriental "beliefs" as it leans to the acceptance of the theory of the soul being born again, known as reincarnation.

There is the belief of those who deny any form of phenomenon of this kind, who consider there is an end of all things at death. When you are dead—you are

dead ! Which is the cessation of earthly materialism and terminates mortal existence finally, irrevocably—and for ever ! Others again, according to their religious beliefs and convictions, believe in an impassable gulf in life, between this world and the next, one that living man is even forbidden to approach, one whose presence and depth no mortal must attempt to explain, as it is not given by the Great Omnipotent Almighty Divine Dispensation to penetrate its secrets. One word describes it—Faith ! This mighty belief sways the world. It is termed Christianity, and, so far as most Western races are concerned, is the faith of the two great Churches, whose religions are known as Catholicism and Protestantism.

Then again there are those who are indifferent, those who are hostile, those who are open-minded, those who seek, while living, for a “manifestation,” some sign, no matter how small so long as it engenders hope that there is “another existence” when the time comes to die. This is the “belief” of Spiritualism

I bow my head to all these human views and pass no comment, but continue with my subject.

From the commencement of civilization to the period of the Middle Ages mysticism—as opposed to orthodox religion—played a strong part in human affairs and history. In its path can be read accounts of witches, demons, phantoms, ghosts, devils, angels, etc., with other kinds of “disembodied spirits” in general.

These things, accepted by minds of more unenlightened times, cannot be reconciled to present-day standards of reasoning ; human evolution, progress, science, education, and the numerous other intellectual attainments of the twentieth century placing such “recorded happenings” as due to ignorance and superstition. But, on the other hand, strange as it may seem, even in these days many unaccountable things happen, which, for want of a better reason, can only be explained by the modern expression “psychic phenomena.”

I know for a fact that there are people who practise cults of black magic in London and other big cities to-day, and these cults are nothing more or less than

the dark pedigree of "possession and witchcraft" revised in modern surroundings.

This is the evil side of the occult, it has no connection with the more lofty ideals of spiritualism, but at the same time it is one the side of the "psychic" inasmuch as many of its "manifestations," "incantations to devils," "spells," and other rituals are in the field of occultism.

Some of its dark practices are unprintable, for it stands for all that is evil, malevolent and wicked. Were the truth only told, many mysterious deaths during the last half-century which, for want of certain facts and evidence have been laid down to suicide, could be traced to the ancient cult of the "dark powers of evil."

I have no intention of dwelling upon this aspect of the occult here—perhaps it might be undertaken in another work—so I will conclude this brief mention of black magic with the following evidence, which is a true account taken from a Sunday newspaper only just recently :

"Woman in Terror of 'Black Magic.' Secret behind Suicide in West-end Club.

"With the burial yesterday, near her ancient home, of a wealthy woman, the last pathetic chapter in a strange story has been written.

"Convinced that a dabbler in 'black magic' had placed her under a spell, she strangled herself in an exclusive West-end club.

"With her mind unhinged by terror, she took her life by gagging herself with a blue silk nightdress and tying a pink woollen bed-jacket tightly round her neck.

"The coroner, in recording his verdict, declared the woman was suffering from the delusion that a sorcerer had her in his power.

"Fear of 'a Spell. Laughed and Talked to Herself.

"Mother keeps 'Dabbler's Name a Secret.'

"Allegations that the sinister cult of 'black magic' has an increasing number of devotees in this country had unexpected confirmation at a Westminster inquest.

"The coroner, Mr. Ingleby Oddie, was investigating the death of Miss "A," 37, independent, of an old Scottish family, who was found dead in her room at a select Club in West End London.

"The family is an old Scottish one, and has been connected with an ancient House for over five hundred years.

"The mother told the coroner that her daughter had come to London from Herefordshire, where she had been staying.

" 'What sort of temperament had she?' asked the coroner.

" 'Well,' replied the mother in a quiet voice, 'she had, I think, a very ordinary temperament, excepting that she was a highly strung person, though not more so than a great many.'

" 'Coroner: 'Had she been sleeping well?' — 'Yes, as far as I know. I never heard her complain.'

" 'Coroner: 'Have you heard of any delusions that she suffered from?' — 'Never, until this terror that she seems to have had the night before this happened.'

" 'Why was that?' — 'Well, I don't know.'

" 'Didn't she have some kind of fear about someone getting an influence over her?' asked the coroner.

"The mother: 'She had a great dislike of anything pertaining to spiritualism or black magic or those sorts of things, and she did, I believe, meet someone in an hotel. I do not wish to bring him in. I know nothing about him. She did think he dabbled in those things. A lot of people do. That frightened her.'

"She added that her daughter did not like the man. His 'atmosphere was not good.'

"Coroner: 'She had an idea that he was getting an influence over her?' — 'That is so, though she did not mention it to me.'

"The mother added: 'I had a letter from her which was absolutely and entirely normal. She said she had had 'flu and that it made her feel ghastly. She also said she had heart attacks.'

"Coroner: 'The fact that she was feeling ill has

probably a very important bearing. Were there any times of depression ?'—'No.'

"The mother added that there was no case of mental trouble in the family.

"Coroner : 'Was your daughter temperate ?'—'Yes, very. She would have a cocktail now and again.'

"'Was she in any financial or other trouble ?'—'None that I know of.'

"A chambermaid at the Club stated that on taking morning tea to Miss "A," she thought she heard her talking to herself.

"'She would not open the door,' she added. 'She said she was very nervous.'

"'Was she talking to herself ?' asked the coroner. 'Yes,' replied the maid, 'and she sort of laughed.'

"Dr. John Taylor gave evidence that death was caused by asphyxia, strangulation, and suffocation. The bed-jacket was tied so tightly round the woman's neck that he could only just get his fingers underneath it.

"He found a slight superficial bruise on the face. Some blue silk was fixed tightly in the mouth. Her teeth were not in good condition, and a number of temporary teeth had been put in, apparently by herself.

"Coroner : 'If anybody had pushed this material into her mouth they must have dislodged those temporary fillings ?'—Dr. Taylor : 'Yes.'

"Recording a verdict of 'Suicide while of unsound mind,' the coroner remarked that Miss Kennedy Erskine had had influenza, and this must have left profound depression and caused mental disturbance.

"'She must have been dwelling on some imaginary influence which she thought some person she had met in an hotel, who was a dealer in black magic, held over her—some kind of spell which she thought he had on her,' he went on.

"'That had been preying on her mind, although it was entirely a delusion.'

"There was no doubt she had strangled herself, the coroner added. It was a very unusual method of taking

one's life. But this woman was in a very unusual condition."

Only a few friends and estate servants followed the *cortège* when Miss "A's" body was laid to rest in the family burial ground on the estate of her honourable and ancient family.

CHAPTER XXII

"Vampires"—or the restless dead. Origin of such a state in the realms of the supernatural. An authentic account of "vampirism" from old and valuable documents. Name of the first great writer upon the subject in fiction form—and how he obtained his research for the idea. An account of some modern murder crime mysteries in this country, with the hall-mark of the vampire. As well as from America, describing one of the most awful crimes in modern times. Does it coincide with the vampire state? Is such a thing possible, due to psychic influence from "evil etheric individualities," known to spiritualists as "earth-bound spirits"?

I MENTIONED in Chapter V about vampires, and referred to that world-renowned fictional writer upon the subject, namely, the late Bram Stoker, unique, but nevertheless brilliant author of the weird book *Dracula*. This work has evoked interest in all parts of the world. Therefore, I intend to devote a chapter to the subject, inasmuch as its relationship concerns the living in connection with crime.

I shall come to the resemblance before I end this chapter, quoting, as near as possible, what are generally reckoned, and what I consider are examples—as near as possible in life—to such a ghastly state. That is, if such a state exists—and if such persons who commit such crimes can be termed vampires. Personally, I think such a description is incorrect. But the comparison fits, and at that I will leave it.

However, let us just examine the meaning of the word—vampire!

Of all the awful states in the realms of supernaturalism, that of alleged vampire existence is the most terrible.

Strangely enough, vampire legends were unknown to English writings until late into the nineteenth century. The state finding no place in the imagination or knowledge of our English authors for the

existence of such a phase of phantomism. The terrible materialization being entirely foreign in its conception, which is no doubt the reason for its absence in all forms of mystic writings emanating from this country.

The origin of vampirism comes from the countries of Central Europe and the Near East, mostly in such places as Serbia, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Turkey, as well as from the countries of the Far East, but chiefly in effect from Serbia. It is from Serbian claims that the word "vampire" is to be traced. It means the soul of a dead body, invariably a criminal in life, that rises from its grave or vault at night—generally sunset—and kills the living by feeding on their blood.

It takes the form of anything it cares to assume: insect, bird, or human being, the most favoured shape at night being the bat. Further, it is reputed to have control of the elements, rain, snow, wind, thunder, and lightning being at its command.

Generally the vampire selects its victim during slumber, attacking a male victim in the dream-shape, or phantasm of some beautiful woman and the female victim in the phantasm of a handsome man.

If entry to the bedroom proves difficult, it can, so it is reputed, dissolve itself into dust particles, entering the room through the keyhole, or under the door. Or again, on a moonlight night in whiffs of faint mist on the moonbeams or, if the windows are secure, by a fierce gust of wind that breaks open the casement fastening or smashes the glass panes, the cause being attributed to violence of the sudden gale.

Strangely enough, no victim has been known to have stated in life, that he, or she, as the case might be, was attacked by a vampire. All have said they had strange dreams and dreamt they saw, and felt, something, or somebody, near their head hovering over them.

In the morning, a slight feeling of tiredness and general lassitude is experienced, as well as a smarting feeling on each side of the neck. Examination of the

site of discomfort reveals two tiny spots on the carotid artery—put down to insect bite. The alleged part of the victim's body, where the vampire makes attack, commonly believed, so it is stated, from where it feeds upon the human blood.

In from ten to fourteen days the victim is dead, passing away silently, without pain, due to weakness, loss of appetite, and an all round wasting of the body.

Hungarian and Serbian people, in the middle of the seventeenth century, at once attributed this to vampirism, with a result that they set out to track down the vampire in its lair. To do so, concentration was made upon a particular suspected vault or grave—generally a vault—which was entered, the coffin opened and the body or remains exposed to view. As a rule—again according to Near East legend—the corpse inside—if a vampire—was not decomposed as would be expected according to the natural laws. Instead would be found a fully developed body, rigid in the icy-coldness of death, but upon being cut or pricked by a knife, blood would flow freely, and this blood was WARM.

Another ever-present sign that was looked for and always encountered in the case of a vampire, was blood around the mouth. Signs, according to Central European superstition, that always betrayed the vampire: due, so it is stated, to its orgy of blood upon the last human victim. Further, its eyes were always open, the gaze seeming to be animated and watching the disturbers of its loathsome nest, unable to resist interference, as the vampire is powerless between dawn and sunset.

Another point I noticed from the source of my research into vampirism, was the look of the lips and teeth of a reputed vampire. In every case the lips were full-blooded and bright crimson in colour. They had the appearance of fangs and the teeth behind them are recorded as long, animal-like, cruel, and fiercely pointed.

To destroy this unholy curse, the head of the corpse

was at once severed from the body, blood flowing warmly and freely, as in the case of such a thing by decapitation of some living person during life. Then a wooden cross, tapered at its base, was driven from the neck deep down into its body. A knife was plunged into the region of the heart, at which last act, the severed head would let out a *piercing scream*. That meant the liberation of the tortured soul—and its departure for ever from the habits and lives of the living.

During this process of “vampire destruction” a holy man, or priest, would be praying for the “lost soul’s” forgiveness, an act, which, according to legend was vouchsafed—as before all human eyes—after this awful ordeal, the body began to wither, decompose, and commence to rapidly perish.

So much then for the case of that much-used word—vampire, or “vamp”! Now one last comment about such a probability in the realms of the supernatural.

In the first place, to come up to modern times, America has given us a film based on this ghastly and weird theme, known the wide world over as *Dracula*. Its theme caught on. All shades of public opinion, with mixed feelings, were either intrigued or interested. The few whose interest was shocked, unmoved, or their “intelligence insulted”—were in the minority. Even those who were cynical and hard-bitten—acclaimed, or admitted, the theme—despite of themselves—was vastly weird and extraordinary. Simply because the presentation was on the side of the supernatural, and about a *practically unknown alleged manifestation* of dead souls known as vampires.

Let us trace its origin. The man who was responsible for the creation of the subject of vampires in fiction form, is, as I have already stated, that brilliant author, the late Mr. Bram Stoker. Until I traced the source of his inspiration it was always my impression—and nobody told me otherwise—that this clever writer was the creator of the theme. Many a time I have heard people say, who have read *Dracula*, that

the author must have had a morbid or demented mind to write upon such a terrible subject.

I used to lean to this view. But not now! For I have discovered that the author of *Dracula* was not mad, but distinctly unique and clever. For he chose as his subject practically an *unknown aspect of supernaturalism*. The credit is due to him for his deep research, his brilliancy in adapting such a subject for a first-rate blood-curdling "thriller." For I will stake my life that there is not such a book like *Dracula*, no, not in any time or country! Except, of course, its ORIGINAL, published in 1745, by a Dominican monk, from which unique work in old English I have written all I know about vampires in this chapter. *The same source, in all probability, from where the author of "Dracula" got his inspiration.* It might be asked, could such a state of things be possible, even in the limits of the supernatural?

My answer to such a query, quite frankly, is non-committal. For in the Near East as also the Far East strange things like this kind of thing are reported having happened. Yes, even within recent years. But I find no trace of such phenomena in the criminal records of Westernized countries.

The nearest thing we have to the legend of vampirism, is from life. Then again, it is due to blood-lust. But it is far removed from Near and Far East phantomism.

"Jack the Ripper," the "Düsseldorf killer," the decapitater of little Evelyn Bowles, and the murderer of Louisa Steele a few years ago on Blackheath Common are the nearest approaches to a human vampire possible. No doubt the "Ripper" murders were the most awful atrocities known to this country. But the killer of poor Louisa Steele was the same type of blood-lust fiend.

I do not intend to describe such awful inhuman details of savagery. The description given to me by an officer in the case—to use his own words—are sufficient: "A man who kills in this way must be inhuman."

Such revolting details as he described in confidence are not fit for description, so I will draw a veil over this account by no further reference, except to describe it for the purposes of this chapter, as near as it is possible to describe—as the work of a “human vampire.”

In America there are many more cases of this kind than happen in our country. Fortunately, we are immune from the menace of repeated crimes by this terrible form of killer. The reason, is due no doubt to the fact that we have not so many mixed racial elements with which to contend.

Take, for instance, the case in 1934, that happened near the town of Cleveland, Mississippi. A farmer named Aurelius Turner and his wife were battered to death with a hammer, the wife, a pretty young woman, about to become a mother, being afterwards mutilated with a knife, under circumstances of revolting and shocking brutality.

For this crime, by smart detective work, the American police arrested a huge negro, more than six feet six inches tall, named James H. Coyres, alias Alonzo Robinson, whose record, when safely behind the prison bars of a “mob-proof” jail—as the entire locality were set on his lynching—proved to be something short of the inhuman and terrible.

When they searched him at the time of arrest, before going to the cabin where he lived with his mother, they found all the evidence of the Turner double killing. In a pocket was discovered a knife. It opened to disclose a blade four inches long. The blade had been filed down so that it formed a double-edged cutting instrument of surgeon-like sharpness. It had also been filed so that it was but a fraction of an inch wide.

It was another find, however, which was most damning—and bore the hall-mark of the vampire. An envelope in the negro's hip pocket was found to contain a small piece of flesh, salted to preserve it. The hard-bitten American detectives all suppressed involuntary shudders as they recognized it.

It was human flesh.

In a trunk at his mother's cabin, wrapped in rags were more pieces of human flesh—salted and cured.

One piece contained the marks of human teeth.

Pathological examination proved them all to have been cut from the mutilated body of pretty Mrs. Turner.

Nor was this all.

The detectives found that in another part of the United States, namely Indianapolis, he had served a sentence of ten years—for robbing a grave to obtain a body—that of a young woman. At the time, he was living in Ferndale, Michigan. Some months after he was in prison a family moved into the house he had lived in. In one room of the house they found a trunk. Curious, they opened it. In doing so, they disclosed a thing even more ghastly than the Turner atrocity.

Carefully wrapped in newspapers and stuffed deep in the trunk, were **FOUR HUMAN HEADS.**

This monster, ghoul, or vampire, or whatever else he can be called, admitted to the possession of the trunk and human heads.

He said he took them from graves—and even under the most terrible “third degree”—would say no more.

To the day of his execution, Alonzo Robinson made no further statement. Whether those four grim decapitated heads represented murder or grave-robbing was never solved.

What, then, is to be made out of an inhuman monster of this kind? Mad!—definitely mad!

In a sense more fit for the doctor than the executioner. But certain psychic students maintain that neither remedy fits the problem. For such inhuman beings are “vampire infested,” or possessed by earth-bound or evil murderous “etheric individualities.”

Again, it is not my place to advance an opinion. All I can do is to quote such happenings. Crimes that have occurred in which all the elements—according to

spiritualism—of murderers—foul, cunning, and inhuman—display by their awful work—such tendencies. That, if scientifically possible, must bring such an inconceivable phase of human action within the realms of “Crime and the Supernatural.”

CHAPTER XXIII

The crime of suicide—psychic phenomena and occult in general. The case of the howling dog at midnight. What was seen—and actually experienced. Also a recorded case of "suicide haunting" at Hove in Sussex.

MANY years ago, as a young night duty constable of the "V" Division, London Metropolitan Police, I experienced another phenomenon that again, like the account related in Chapter II, had to do with the awful crime of self destruction.

However, in that case it was related to the occult, and the finding of the body was borne out by psychometry, at a spiritualistic séance. In this case it was different, far more on the side of the "unknown," and bears in its revelations of what I experienced, all the appearances of a "phantasm of the dead" in manifestation.

I stood one lovely night in July near the Roehampton end of Richmond Park. It was rather warm, night having ushered out a glorious spell of continual sunshine. The myriads of sparkling stars high up in the vault of heaven and a cool soft breeze that had sprung up, auguring well for the return of another beautiful day.

Silence reigned! I could, as I stood, hear the tick of the watch under my tunic; a cheap little metal one that at the time I was carrying. However, nearby, in some of the dense nest of brushwood and trees, there was every now and again the long drawn out howl of some dog, which common superstition generally supposes to announce the coming of death.

I remember noticing my watch which showed a little before midnight, and noting that in another three-quarters of an hour I was due, at the end of my

beat, to make report to the patrolling night-duty inspector in Upper Richmond Road.

At this time there was a narrow footpath I had to patrol which was about a quarter of a mile in length. This had to be worked to a small bridge, then back, and out once again into the lane. A path seldom used—especially after dark.

This lonely passage, in the summer, was for all the world like a dark tunnel, in the centre of which was a footpath about three feet wide. It was hemmed in both sides; on one side by a high brick wall, and the other by a six-foot wooden fence that shut off the rather extensive grounds of a private asylum. From these grounds, big branches of the large trees overhung the fence. These in turn, by reason of the dense spread of leaves, formed an arch over the footpath, by touching almost opposite the high brick wall, causing, in doing so, the exclusion of all light, and bringing about the tunnel-like effect I have mentioned. In the day-time it was silent and peaceful. On a hot summer day, beautiful, dark and cool. But at night, due to this effect of nature, the darkness was intense, and—I must admit—to anybody at all nervous, passing along it in the night, somewhat impressive and awesome.

However, I had got so used to it in three weeks of night duty that I could walk to the end of this lonely and dark footpath without turning on the rays of my lamp, being guided upon my return journey by the rays of a gas lamp in the lane, the light being plainly seen at the end of the passage, making my journey back into the lane quite easy.

On this particular night, I was about to traverse for the first time the lonely passage in question. However, I halted instead at its commencement, by the side of a small stile, to light up a cigarette.

As I did so, my attention was sharply drawn again to the howling of the dog I have mentioned. More so as I had never noticed it before this night. The sound seemed to be somewhere close at hand. Its last weird howl this time, appearing to come echoing from along the passage. Then its long-drawn, blood-curdling

howls abruptly ceased—and all assumed once again the customary stillness. It seemed to become so quiet and ominous—that it was almost death-like in its silence.

I stood listening with all my faculties intent. I had a feeling—I was not alone!

Suddenly, I became aware of a noise coming towards me from out of the darkness of the passage. No mistaking it. Nearer and nearer it came. A soft pad!—pad!—pad!—pad!

What was it?

I stood frozen.

It was almost on top of me. Then the sound stopped.

Glaring into the inky darkness, I thought—and still do to this day—that I saw the “shape” of a huge dog. But, whatever it was, from that second—I never saw or heard anything again. Thinking it time to move before I became too jumpy, I placed my lamp on the front of my belt and made off into the pitch-darkness of the passage.

I have mentioned, that I was quite accustomed by this time to work this passage in the dark without the aid of my lamp. However, after what I had just experienced, I thought—for the first time—it would be best to do so. But I suppressed the instinct as a sign of nerves, and went, as was my habit, along the path in the dark. I had not gone far when, in spite of the warm summer night I felt distinctly strange—a peculiar physical sensation of coldness. One I had never experienced before. It was like the sudden, damp aura of chilliness, that is felt from contact with a cold sea mist.

My face and hands went clammy. A shudder went through me in the inky darkness.

Frantically I clutched at my lamp to switch on its welcome rays, when—before I could do so—something icy cold touched my face.

With a yell I jumped back, switched on my lamp—and as I did so, the rays revealed a sight that, for one split second, chilled me into petrified horror.

A corpse was hanging right athwart my path. In the darkness I had walked straight into a dead body.

It was suspended by the neck, on a rope, from a branch of one of the overhanging trees. When I bumped into it, a dead hand was on a level with my face. Hence my reason for the instantaneous blood-freezing chill I felt—as I recoiled back in sudden horror—when the icy cold “hand of death” touched my face.

With regard to this experience, the name of the man, how he came there, when he did so, what he took his life over, are beside the point! It is long, long ago forgotten. The fact remains that medical testimony proved him to have been dead some time before being discovered. This place, and the hour chosen to commit suicide—on account of the extreme loneliness! Many crimes of a similar kind, and more or less under similar circumstances, are committed yearly, and the records of Press and police of our great metropolis, are, unfortunately, only too full of numerous tragedies of this kind. We are led to believe that the man who takes his own life is guilty of soul destruction; an abomination in the eyes of the Creator, for which the punishment in after life is eternal damnation. Would this have been a reason? For instance—the cry of a tormented soul?

There is a phase at the moment of death, termed by many great scientific investigators as “etheric contact” or “atomic affinity.” This electric presence of the “infinite cosmos” is considered to own some magnetic attraction in life and death to what is commonly known as the human soul. When death takes place before, at the time, or after, this “magnetic attraction” of a higher sphere draws away from earth the human soul, or the “individualistic universal mind,” or the “spark of life” to a domain referred to in all churches and faiths as “the other world.”

Was this, in such circumstances, the call of a soul in distress?

Now I do not wish to dwell on the physical side of this experience, the aim being devoted to “Crime and

the Supernatural"; also, inasmuch, as it deals with psychic phenomena and the occult in general which is the object of this work.

Why did I note so particularly the howl of that strange dog? A thing that had never happened before until this tragedy was revealed.

I remained on this beat for some time afterwards on night duty. True, I never went down that footpath after this uncanny experience without having my lamp turned on, but I never heard the howling of that dog again, nor did I ever experience again that awful feeling of coldness even when I approached or passed the spot afterwards. As for what I saw—or thought I saw—the "huge big dog"—perhaps it was an hallucination, a fallacy of perception, but I very much doubt it.

Then in view of all materialistic considerations, these strange inexplicable phenomena remain unexplained. At least so far as the incredulous are concerned.

I have my own views!

They may not be the same as the spiritualistic doctrines of belief, but they are in sympathy and consistent with them. That is, on the night I heard, saw and felt what I did in the realms of "Crime and the Supernatural."

The phenomenon revealed to me was the "earthbound" spirit of that dead man. Why by the howl and in the form of a dog, I cannot say. This phase of the occult is popularly known as "haunting." The "earthbound" spirit that does so, the "ghost."

As a rule these "ghosts" appear in astral form, namely *the earthy body* which under normal conditions constitutes the *ethereal frame of the soul*.

A "ghost" is not necessarily an evil spirit or entity, though sometimes it is, as it depends upon the motive for haunting. Mr. Denis Conan Doyle, son of the great Sir Arthur, the world-famed spiritualist, says: Some people, when they pass on, are still so engrossed in material interests that they are unwilling or unable to detach their thought from them, with the

result that they "haunt" certain places and localities. The miser with his money, the engrossed acquirer of wealth, the man who has left documents which he wishes destroyed, the murderer at the scene of his crime, and others are so absorbed in certain objects and places that they become earthbound by their own thoughts, and they do not lead normal lives in the next world, but remain on the surface of the earth.

Without accepting his views upon haunting in support of the crime of suicide, as connected with the world of the accult, there is no more eminent authority for the source of this strange account than that of Mr. Frank Podmore, in a phenomenon described to him by a lady living at Brighton.

Mrs. O'Donnell had been residing in Brighton for some months during the winter of 1897-98, and on March 22nd, 1898, she moved into furnished rooms at Hove.

She felt unwell the first evening in the new rooms, and was much disturbed at night by the sound of footsteps overhead. On complaining of this in the morning she learnt that the room above was untenanted. The noises were repeated on the second night, and Mrs. O'Donnell felt too ill to get up. The third night she had a large fire made up and had a night-light for company.

About 11 p.m. her daughter went to her own room, wishing her a better night.

Again the feeling of footsteps overhead, so much so that a perfect thrill of terror ran through her. She kept looking towards the fire for about an hour and then thought she would turn towards the wall where, terrible to relate, a horrible figure was standing by her bedside, one arm pointing to the adjoining room (vacant) and the other pointing to Mrs. O'Donnell, quite close to her face.

She gasped for breath and covered her face with the clothes.

After some time she reassured herself it was all imagination, and again turned to where she saw the horrid apparition.

There it still was.

She shrieked for terror and called out : " Oh, my God, what is it ? "—and put out her left hand as if to feel if it was real, but—imagine her horror—she was clasped by an icy hand of death.

She remembered no more.

The figure she saw was that of a small man, very dark, with very small hands, and covered in a tattered black suit from head to foot, more like a scarecrow than anything human.

She said : " I slept in my daughter's room the next night, or rather occupied it, for I could not sleep. Towards the middle of the night the door opened (I had locked it) and a small, dark, gentlemanly young man walked in saying : ' Ah, so you have the Scotsman's room '—smiled pleasantly, and walked out of the room as he had come in. It was all so strange and dreadful, I told some friends next day.

" They were greatly startled and said : ' Can this be the house where the suicide happened a few days ago ? ' "

" I at once called up the landlady. She denied it, saying it was next door.

" I was determined to find out, and on sending to the various tradespeople with whom we dealt, found it was the very house.

" The landlady then admitted it. The poor young man had slept in my bedroom and the adjoining window (to which he had pointed) was his sitting room, from the window of which he threw himself out. He was killed on the spot.

" The landlady's son waited on us at the table. On investigating the matter with him and his mother afterwards, I found his description of the poor young fellow corresponded with the apparition I saw. He was four and twenty, rather small and very dark. He had had bad bronchitis and became depressed.

" On the morning of his death, he got up rather early, saying he felt better and when his family left him he immediately opened his window and threw himself out.

" He fell from a second floor window into the area. His clothes were torn to pieces. On enquiring as to

the Scotsman's room, the landlady told me a young Scotch gentleman (now in service) had occupied our drawing room and that bedroom I changed to, and that he was a great friend of the poor young fellow who had ended his life in such a dreadful manner.

"The landlady also admitted she would not go upstairs after dark alone, so she also must have considered the house haunted."

CHAPTER XXIV

Crime—the gospel—and the supernatural. The cock-crow at dawn, What the old night duty policeman told me. Strange psychic accounts from the Scriptures. Are there people still living—who have never known death? Modern sects and cults who believe in such phenomena. An account of the "Angels of Mons."

SEVERAL months after my last recorded experience I stood, early one morning, talking to another old night-duty policeman.

It was the hour of dawn. At the first grey streak of daybreak, from the east came, faint and shrill, the clarion cock crow so familiar to all. Then it was answered by another—and so on, and so on.

"The call of the Supernatural," said my old colleague.

His remark startled me.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Simply what I say," he replied. "The call of the Supernatural."

Then, seeing my lack of understanding, he said:

"At this hour, life and death are more frequent than at any other time. At this hour—the hour of dawn—in the reign of Roman Tiberius, A.D. 30, the greatest crime in the world was committed, foretold to the Apostle Peter in every minute detail by Almighty God's Messenger—BEFORE THE COCK CROW—THOU SHALT DENY ME THRICE. Words that epitomize the 'World's Greatest Tragedy' in 'Crime and the Supernatural.' Treachery by Judas! Denial by Peter! Perjury and murder by MAN. Then came the greatest of all supernatural manifestations—again at dawn—the rising of the dead, Christ's irrevocable sign of the life everlasting."

I was silent. Then he slowly went on again.

"There is no recorded evidence that before the death of Christ the cock crowed at dawn. That cock crow

goes all round the world. It never ceases ! It is the Creator's eternal signal to remind living man at dawn that it is light's triumph over darkness—Life's triumph over Death."

I have never forgotten this wise old fellow's statement, for there is conveyed in it a deep significance which can be reconciled to all the phenomena of the supernatural as judged from present earthly standards.

I had not wanted to bring the question of religion at all into the theme of my subject, however this almighty sign of the Creator's promise to man—of life after death—has, from that moment, been an eternal consolation in the hearts of all men right throughout the ages.

With humble deference, can we dare to enquire, even at this length of time, about the almighty powers of our Creator ? No man would presume to so much as advance even a theory. To the puny minds of men stupendous, almighty powers of this kind are denied.

St. Matthew quotes what I mean first in the very last paragraph of chapter sixteen. He records Christ as saying :

" Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Again, in the thirteenth chapter of St. John, is read :

" Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved."

This refers to Christ's inference that Judas Iscariot would betray him, but none present understood the significance of His words.

Then, in his last chapter, St. John refers to this man once more, at the moment when Christ appeared to them—after His death—for the last time on earth :

" Then Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following, which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee ? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? follow thou me."

In every way it is miraculous, in every way unfathomable, mysterious, and supernatural. The Synoptic

Gospels abound with every aspect of what we term the psychic—even to the first known case of hypnotism, only in this instance it was Divine knowledge. Irrespective of the fact that the Saviour walked the earth in the semblance of man, He KNEW His destiny!

Man, who followed Him in the form of Peter, did not. Knowing the weakness and frailty of human nature, He WILLED that His Apostle should DENY Him. Several days prior to His murder, in a farewell conference with His followers, He forecast to Peter His exact actions: BEFORE THE COCK CROWS THOU SHALT DENY ME THRICE. It was His Divine WILL.

The world knows the sequel.

The Scriptures abound with instances in the different tributaries of occultism and mysticism. For example, the strange remark of our Saviour after His resurrection from the dead recorded in the Gospel of St. John, when Christ revealed Himself to His Apostles in earthly manifestation there went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: "Yet Jesus said not unto him, he shall not die, but, *if I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee.*"

This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

What was the deep meaning in these words uttered by our Saviour?

I do not pretend to explain! except to state that there are several select religious bodies of men and women throughout the world who claim that THIS MAN NEVER DIED AND STILL LIVES. About this fact I can say no more. There are those who study this channel of mysticism who might explain. But it is a tributary of occultism not within my subject.

In the Old Testament, even more so than in the New, occultism, mysticism, and strong instances of psychic phenomena run throughout the whole of its thirty-nine books.

Chapter twenty-eight of the book of Samuel is completely devoted to Saul's visit at midnight to the witch of Endor.

The dead and venerable Samuel was exorcised from his grave by the witch at Saul's request. When his "spiritual manifestation" appeared, Saul, in mortal terror, was told of his doom. The phantasm of the dead prophet king spoke these ominous words to him: "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me."

As it was foretold, the next day on the field of battle Saul and his three sons met their death.

Signs, manifestations, and wonders have appeared to mankind throughout the ages. In the Great War there were numerous accounts of this kind—for instance, the legend of the "Angels of Mons." That, despite all denials and explanations, such as "Mass Hysteria," etc., still persists, and is as strong in acceptance to-day as ever.

On the way down from Mons there were many strange accounts of this phenomenon, that I can testify to from my own experience, which could only have come from the actual men on the spot where these astral forms were seen and certainly not from the pen of any imaginative writer.

It must be recalled that the old Original Expeditionary Force had received orders to *stand* and *fight* next day, totally unaware that the 5th French Army on their right *had been in retirement for over twenty-four hours*.

Just before dawn, the late Earl of Ypres, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army—then Sir John French—gave the order to retire.

Haig's First Army got away under cover of darkness, so did Smith-Dorrien's Second Army and Nineteenth Infantry Brigade, but owing to the huge, overwhelming numbers of the German Army, Smith-Dorrien had to turn and fight at La Cateau, for in the darkness the enemy had come up far too close for him to escape.

It was during these tense grey early hours of fierce and bitter fighting from the field of Mons to La Cateau, when friend and foe were hardly distinguishable in the darkness, that many strange things happened.

The question of the "Angels of Mons" is not one of legend but one of faith. What I heard about it at the

time (irrespective of any proof to the contrary), including the versions of two men who swore to having seen these astral forms in the sky, is quite good enough for me !

As the last three or four brigades of our British armies were silently retiring in the darkness, from just about the field of Mons, high in the sky, greyish astral forms resembling several angels were seen by our soldiers. From numerous accounts I heard they floated, hovering over our armies, drifting always in a southerly direction, the way of the British retirement.

They were seen like this for a good half an hour, then, when all men were safe on the march without a shot being fired—the phenomena vanished.

CHAPTER XXV

The prospect. A brief summary. Post-war accounts of great scientific men and women. Can it be possible soon to communicate with the dead? By clairvoyance—prevision—psychometry—conversation—oracles. Methods of communication as approved by science. Is the world altering in its views and acceptance of life? What is death? Is universal mind “etheric” or “atomic energy” of the great infinite cosmos? If so—does it leave the body at death? Is it what has so often been called the “spark of life”? Science now claims by apparatus to trace some form of “etheric” or “electrical” energy leaving the dead body. Experiments at the present day which have happened.

UP to a few years ago scientific thought only included in its calculations the basic fact that electrons and protons constituted the universe. From these two etheric factors were born the atoms. Included in this scheme was electro-magnetism and light. Included again in these deductions came space and time—and for a period this was the all in all of man’s scientific knowledge.

Then came Einstein’s “fourth dimension”—and as a result science now finds that this stupendous theory eclipses all. For, on the road to the discovery of what constitutes the universe, man finds the theory of fourth dimension—is outside space!—outside time!

Again, man has advanced to the reinforcement of the electrons and protons three other constituents of “atomic energy”—the positrons, deuterons, and neutrons, all of which are “ether” ingredients that form the “make-up” of invisible matter. Such are thought vibrations, electrical-magnetic radiations, and other mysterious elements of the universe which the ever-restless mind of man is trying slowly, blindly—but tenaciously—to unravel.

Can man pierce a small hole in the veil of the “Unknown?” Will time prove that he can, no matter how vaguely, say, “I know what constitutes life and

death." Is it likely? Is it possible that by the discovery of other electrical particles just as powerful and elusive he may stumble on some clue of "atomic energy" which is the universe? Can "atomic physics" or rathermore, the accumulation of data, in time be able to show light upon the processes of life?

A large school of thought leans to the view that life in some unknown way makes use of "atomic energy." The gift, or adaptability, to use this "energy" is the solution and specific brand of life. How human nature adapts itself to this unknown way, also what goes to make up these universal and mighty forces, is still locked up in mystery.

Fortunately, the evolution of mankind irrevocably proves that throughout the ages the mind of man has been going steadily forward!—forward!—forward! Then why "mystery" about life and death? Why mystery about the theory of life after death?—that is of course, if it is a theory. The first question concerns irrevocable certainties—two of the most natural things to all that breathe. The second seems to depend upon what is discovered about both great natural happenings. This, it is hoped, may ultimately illuminate the processes of life and death, as it is only by the knowledge of such facts man can hope to understand the mightier second question of life after death. "Certainly" (so thinks one of the many great scientific minds of the Royal Society), "it is not scientifically impossible with our present knowledge of the electrical basis of matter and the electrical nature of life. Indeed we now know from the work done on the mitrogentic radiation—the radiation given off when cells divide as they grow—that life has its own particular radiation. And, apart from that confirmation, we should expect (if life is a particular form of energy) that it would have its peculiar radiation and wave-length."

Could not these radiations have something to do with what is known to-day as human telepathy? Or again, the etheric particles which go to make up "psychic" qualities? Is this quality of the "psychic?" This unknown factor of factors, that which is of the human

mind—called thought? Or of the soul, or “spark of life?” Is the human body from the moment that life is slapped into it sometimes by the doctor or midwife a lifeless organization? When this animation is supplied, called life, does some “atomic energy,” some “electric charge” enter the body? Is this the force known as “life” which grows stronger and stronger then weaker and weaker as age advances and death ceases all forms of energy, in a similar way to which a charged battery runs down? If so, from whence does this “force” come and where does it go?

I mean the “force” which actuates our thoughts, governs our inner selves, controls our emotions and instincts—in fact moulds our character, guides our actions in a living, breathing world, full of the same “driving force.”

It is known that the brain controls all actions, emotions, instincts, and thought. But the brain is only an instrument in the same way as a wireless, say. Deprive the wireless apparatus of its electric force and it is useless, irrespective of all its mechanical complication. In the same comparison is the human brain. Deprive the brain of its “electron force”—the mind—and this also is useless, irrespective of all its complicated organizations, such as the brain, muscles, organs, tissues, blood, and nerves. The brain does not act because it is the brain, or the eyes see because they are the eyes, or the tongue speak because it is the tongue. All are human mechanisms, controlled by that complicated, wonderful, and powerful human dynamo called the brain, which in turn actuates the whole of the human body. But again, as in the case of the huge or small wireless set, which we know, it is actuated by the ether; deprived of such “force”—it is dead! So, in a manner of description, is the human brain which we know is actuated by the mind. Deprived of such “force” this also is dead.

Yet no man knows what is the *mind*, nor does any man know what is the *ether*! This is not a sweeping or assertive statement. It is common sense. It is not laid down in the jargon of the “highbrow” or the

lofty technical phraseology of the scientist, professor, or student. I have explained in simple language, all the more easily understood because it is true—I mean the question of the human mind and ether.

Now, as we are dealing with clairvoyance, hypnotism, telepathy, occultism, etc., in its relation to crime, with the angle of the supernatural—and life after death—as a strong point of human interest, could it not be possible for all these various phases of mysticism to be explained in the same way? For instance, we know a “force” governs one of the most miraculous inventions of times, but it is only known as the ether. The results of its power are by the modern invention known as wireless. This “force” then, this unknown agency or agencies, must be the “driving force” of all known things. It is of the universe, the “infinite cosmos”; answers to unknown laws; governs by unknown laws. Electricity is its principle, its force. Man in turn also governs it as well as answers to it.

It is the opinion of many that this mighty “force” which we call the ether is *all-abiding*! It was the “psychic force” of the Christian Fathers. The “disembodied spirit” or manifestation of the genuine medium of the past and present. The *phenomena* of every kind known to man since the Dawn of all time.

The ether! The infinite cosmos! The “Universal force”—name it what we may—*was*!—*is*!—and *will be*! Evil or good, it is the “force” behind all things from “possession and witchcraft”—“physical phenomena”—“clairvoyance”—“materialisation”—“automatism”—“dream-consciousness”—“thought-transference”—“communications with the dead”—“phantasms of the dead”—“haunting”—“trance”—to occultism in general, in which are included all forms of animal magnetism and hypnotic influence.

Whether this “force” be the ether (for the want of a better description) or some mighty agency such as that which comprises the mysteries of electricity, can a human being possessing developed powers consisting of this “force” be understood as “psychic”? For it is known that right throughout the ages up to the

present day such people have possessed powers of this kind.

Is this the same "force" that is so universally admitted to appear at death, commonly known as apparitions or ghosts? To even deign an answer, before replying to such a question, it is best to examine what kind of data or evidence is available as precedent for the reply. Has modern science anything to tell in this direction? What is known of death? Is there any "etheric" transplantation? Any sign that life *does leave the body*, I mean at the exact second or moment of death? There seems to be an increasing argument in favour—that some "etheric" spark does leave the body at death, which, so far as modern science is concerned, is as *much as we know*.

I feel lonely in my contention about such a weighty, all-powerful, universal problem, but take consolation in the fact that I am not entirely alone, for there is a gradually growing school of thought that is, I feel sure, in sympathy with the opinions outlined.

Mr. Gerald Heard, makes a remarkable claim about "what happens when you die." It is well worth quoting. I accept his claim as authentic. It constitutes, without doubt, one of the most wonderful claims of modern times so far made in this direction, upon scientific lines, about the ever-present topic of life and death:

"Finally, further work seems to show that the whole body has round it its own electric charge.

"Now, these discoveries about the electric charging of the body have at last given an accurate test as to whether a thing is alive or dead.

"The difference between 'dead' and 'alive' is just this: a live nerve is literally a 'live wire'; a live cell is a cell which has its electric field still round it.

"Discovery, however, could not stop there. The question naturally arises:

"If this charge goes off at the moment of death, if that is what causes the thing to die, would it not

be worth watching and trying to get a record of some sort of the 'decharging'? Should not one see whether a spark, if only a single electron, signalled the release?

"Well, the first piece of work in this momentous advance has been reported. There is an instrument which can catch a single electron even better than can the Geiger counter, for it can actually show you the path the single electron took.

"This apparatus is called the Wilson Cloud Chamber. It is rather simple—just a cylinder, the piston of which can suddenly be drawn down making a vacuum, with a tiny piece of damp paper on the cylinder head which lets loose its damp to make the mist.

"In the side of the cylinder is a window so that a camera can take instantaneous photographs as the mist forms.

"An electron passing across the mist leaves for a moment a track of microscopic droplets along the path it took through the mist.

"This the photo records, and so you have the electron's course. Into a cell at the side of this chamber the researcher put first a grasshopper, then a frog, and then a mouse.

"He timed the vacuum to form the mist and the camera to take the photo at the moment that the creature died. He thought to see some electron tracks. The exposures he did get were far stranger.

"In none of the cases (twenty-six out of fifty) in which it turned out the animal was still alive was there anything unusual recorded.

"In ten more cases, where the animal was dead, still nothing showed—not even a single electron track.

"But in fourteen cases, when the photographs were developed, an utterly unexpected thing appeared. Outlined on the vapour above where the animal lay, but pointing the opposite way, was a vague form of the animal.

"It cannot be a reflection. The researcher himself

thinks it is the electric charge—the pattern of electrons which, as long as the body was alive, gave it its vitality.

“What the photo shows is these electrons suddenly disengaged.

“Still, for the moment, they are keeping their pattern, but they are rapidly leaving behind those other electrons and protons which make up the material body, and which now, without this other electric field to hold them together, will become disordered and dissipated in that change of death we call decay.

“A couple of years ago it would have been far harder to accept this possibility than it is to-day, and to entertain this interpretation of these very odd photographs.

“For then we thought that there were only two kinds of basic stuff in the universe, the electrons and the protons, out of which all atoms, every thing and stuff, had to be made, and made of nothing else.

“Electrons and protons made the universe, the universe was electrons and protons.

“There was nothing over to enquire about—unless you still thought that the facts about light and electro-magnetism didn't fit really very well into this simple system.

“But in the last two years, besides electrons and protons, we've come to know of positrons and deuterons and neutrons.

“The latter alone are strangely unsuspected forms of energy. As they have no 'charge' they can pass through most things and cannot be detected by any ordinary electric means.

“It is this peculiarity which kept them from being discovered for so long. They are a force right on the frontier of what can be found out.”

So now, my dear reader, I must get ready to leave you. I am acutely conscious that I shall be accused both of not having said enough, and of having said too

much. Also, I shall probably be told I ought to have said nothing at all.

My aim has been to show how crime is linked up in many ways with the occult, also the various aspects of clairvoyance that have been used in its direction. The main theme, of course, that animates the book is—will the psychic in the future aid crime detection? If so, is there sufficient known about the “power” by science to justify such a claim?

All my stories, records, accounts, as well as quotations on the subject of “Crime and the Supernatural,” I stand or fall by. What I have undertaken in the way of a work of this kind is no light task. My feelings can be likened to the man crawling in “no-man’s-land” between trenches of friend and foe. *In the dark* I can be mistaken, and get fired on from all sides.

CHAPTER XXVI

The first psychic test of modern spiritualism. "Crime and the Supernatural" first instance. Two statements and accounts of other witnesses of this uncanny manifestation.

THE wireless does not function by means of the ether because man has proved it so, but man has proved it so because ether causes it to function, but the greatest minds of the world cannot say what the ether is.

As far as we know it is a constituent of the great universe, and, like its similar etheric counterpart, electricity, can be harnessed and utilized by man in many ways and forms, but we are still in the dark as to what it is.

There is a large school of thought which seems to think the ether has everything to do with the "force" of many inexplicable things. It is a ponderous question!

The ultra-violet, infra-red and Gama rays have revealed to man many wonderful things on the question of light. Then there are invisible rays, "death rays" and many other kinds, all natural sources, tapped from the great bosom of the universe.

It is strange! but the first *test* that commenced world-wide doctrine of modern spiritualism arose from a case which can only be attributed to "Crime and the Supernatural."

Every great movement has its initial start. Often without ceremony—that may arise later! For instance, the telegraph, telephone, transatlantic cable and modern wireless, all actuated by etheric conditions and ceaselessly used by the world, took their initial test from the fingers or voice of the experimenter or testing engineer.

So in the first *test* of the great uprush of psychic force, it commenced with murder! However, in this case, all the circumstances were lowly, the actors uneducated, humble and poor, the communication from the "other side" sordid—the purport no other than that of revenge.

Whether the humble spirit of this murdered man can be considered a good sign is beside the point. The fact is, he had been brutally robbed and murdered, a crime which was not revealed until after his ghost or spirit had acquainted the world by psychic communication from the dead.

In the spirit world, as on this side of the veil, the motives and company you keep and attract rest with yourself—to use the words of W. E. Henley, man "is the captain of his fate—the master of his soul." According to spiritualism this epitomizes all that it is necessary to understand. But, to my subject!

Hydesville, the scene where this incident first took place, was, at the time, in the month of March, 1848, an obscure little hamlet of New York State, U.S.A., consisting of a cluster of houses of a very humble type. One of these houses was inhabited by a family of the name of Fox. The father, mother, Margaret, aged fourteen, Kate aged eleven and Leah aged nineteen. The last girl was, with others of the family, out in the world earning her living, as a teacher of music in Rochester, about twenty miles away.

The house they occupied had an uncanny reputation. strange noises having been heard by other tenants who had occupied it in the past. However, it was not until the Fox family took over the tenancy that the noises increased in intensity. Sometimes it was a constant series of bumps and knockings, then raps, and at other times, noises like furniture being shifted about.

The children were terrified and refused to sleep apart, their alarm being so great that it became necessary to shift them into their parents' bedroom. Even here, so vibrant were the sounds that the beds thrilled and shook. An exhaustive search was made, Fox senior on one side

of the door, his wife on the other, but the noises did not cease.

It was noticed that these uncanny sounds were adverse to daylight, a fact which suggested possible trickery, but try as all concerned would to solve the reason, no solution was forthcoming.

Then came the night of March 31st, 1848. Bear this date in mind—I've a reason for emphasizing it, my object being that it was from this date that modern spiritualism commenced.

On this date the first elementary *test* of spiritualism took place in a tumble-down shack by a circle of candle-light. With the heavy shadows lurking in the corners, silence reigning all round, and darkness accentuating the dread suspense of something supernatural, the noises broke out again—on this occasion louder and more frequent than at any other time.

Then a singular action, on the part of young Kate Fox, took place—I suppose in sheer terror or defiance—she snapped her fingers. The noises stopped! Encouraged by this to keep on, the young girl snapped her fingers at short intervals. Each snap was answered by a rap or knock. When she snapped her fingers without noise—the knocks still continued.

This psychic force could apparently see as well as hear. The mother asked a number of questions. They were given in numerals and answered by the same way in knocks. The spirit insisted she had seven children. Mrs. Fox knocked out six repeatedly, but always the reply was SEVEN knocks. Then she recalled that an infant, long since dead at its birth, was one of her offspring she had forgotten.

Several neighbours were called in to witness these strange and uncanny experiences. At first they were amused at the exactness of replies to the messages rapped out, but their amusement soon turned to wonder, then consternation, and finally to fear and awe.

The children were taken away by neighbours, the man Fox and his wife remaining—but the noises still continued.

Towards the early hours of the coming day, a large party of "Hydesvillers" had gathered in the house with the crude intention of investigating the phenomenon.

Raps and knocks, they all knew, if spelt out systematically, would hold a conversation with this "unknown intelligence." Somebody amongst them took on this task of spokesman and the following conversation was made out.

He was a spirit! The house they were in held the bones and remains of his once earthly body. The name of a former occupant who had murdered him five years ago was rapped out.

He had been murdered and buried in the cellar. At the time of his murder he was thirty-five years old. He was a travelling hawker, had been invited to stop at the house for the night and during his sleep had been murdered for his money.

In the cellar, scene of the murdered man's grave, it was found that when one of the investigators stood on, or about, the centre of the earthen floor, dull, pulsating thumps from underneath the ground could be plainly heard.

From this date onwards the strange, uncanny happenings gained for the Foxes' residence the unenviable fame of a haunted house, but it did not deter intense local interest as well as scientific, alien, experimental and general public interest throughout the United States.

It is on record that, during the time this phenomenon was happening, many people visited the house, banded together, to hear and testify to this hitherto inexplicable psychic manifestation of the supernatural taking place.

Within a week statements were taken from many of the principal witnesses present during the "Hydesville episodes." I do not know if there is an original pamphlet extant to-day of this remarkable spiritualistic manifestation, but there were many printed about it at the time, in New York, under the title of "A Report of the Mysterious Noises heard in the house of Mr. John D. Fox."

However, in the absence of such valuable data, I have done the next best thing and used the statements of two of the Fox family, which run as follows :

Statement of Mrs. Fox :

" On the night of the first disturbance we all got up, lighted a candle and searched the entire house, the noises continued during the time and were heard near the same place.

" Although not very loud, it produced a jar of the bedsteads and chairs that could be felt when we were in bed. It was a tremendous motion, more than a sudden jar, which continued on this night until we slept. I did not sleep until about twelve o'clock.

" On March 30th, we were disturbed all night. The noises were heard in all parts of the house. My husband stationed himself outside the door while I stood inside, and the knocks came on the door between us.

" We heard footsteps in the pantry and walking downstairs ; we could not rest, and I then concluded that the house must be haunted by some unhappy restless spirit. I had often heard of such things, but had not witnessed anything of the kind that I could not account for before.

" On Friday night, March 31st, 1848, we concluded to go to bed early and not permit ourselves to be disturbed by the noises, but try and get a night's rest.

" My husband was here on all these occasions, heard the noises, and helped search.

" It was very early when we went to bed on this night—hardly dark. I had been so broken of rest I was almost sick. My husband had not gone to bed when we first heard the noise on this evening. I had just lain down when it commenced as usual. I knew it from all other noises I had ever heard before.

" The children, who slept in the other bed in the room, heard the rapping, and tried to make similar sounds by snapping their fingers.

" My youngest child, Cathie, said : ' Mr. Stillfoot,

do as I do,' clapping her hands. The sound instantly followed her with the same number of raps. When she stopped, the sound ceased for a short time.

"Then Margaretta said, in sport: 'Now, do just as I do. Count one, two, three, four, striking one hand against the other at the same time,'—and the raps came as before. She was afraid to repeat them.

"Then Cathie said in her childish simplicity: 'Oh, mother, I know what it is. To-morrow is April Fool's day and it's somebody trying to fool us.'

"I then thought I could put a test that no one in the place could answer. I asked the 'noise' to rap my different children's ages successively.

"Instantly, each one of my children's ages was given correctly, pausing between them sufficiently long to individualize them until the seventh—at which a longer pause was made, and then three more emphatic raps were given, corresponding to the age of the little one that died, which was my youngest child.

"I then asked: 'Is this a human being that answers my questions correctly?'

"There was no rap.

"I asked: 'Is it a spirit? If it is, make two raps.'

"Two sounds were given as soon as the request was made.

"I then said: 'If it was an injured spirit, make two raps,' which were instantly made, causing the house to tremble.

"I asked: 'Were you injured in this house?'

"The answer was given as before.

"'Is the person living that injured you?'—answered by raps in the same manner.

"I ascertained by the same method that it was a man, aged thirty-five years, that he had been murdered in this house, and his remains were buried in the cellar; that his family consisted of a wife and five children, two sons and three daughters, all living at the time of his death, but that his wife had since died.

"I asked: 'Will you continue to rap if I call my neighbours, that they may hear too?'

" The raps were loud in the affirmative.

" My husband went and called in Mrs. Redfield, our nearest neighbour. She is a very candid woman. The girls were sitting up in bed clinging to each other and trembling with terror. I think I was as calm as I am now. Mrs. Redfield came immediately (this was about half-past seven), thinking she would have a laugh at the children. But when she saw them pale with fright and nearly speechless, she was amazed, and believed there was something more serious than she supposed.

" I asked a few questions for her, and was answered as before.

" He told her age exactly.

" She then called her husband, and the same questions were asked and answered.

" Then Mr. Redfield called in Mr. Duesler and wife, and several others. Mr. Duesler then called in Mr. and Mrs. Hyde, also Mr. and Mrs. Jewell. Mr. Duesler asked many questions and received answers.

" I then named all the neighbours I could think of and asked if any of them had injured him, and received no answers.

" Mr. Duesler then asked questions and received answers. He asked : ' Were you murdered ? '

" Raps affirmative.

" ' Can your murderer be brought to justice ? '

" No sound.

" ' Can he be punished by law ? '

" No answer.

" He then said : ' If your murderer cannot be punished by the law, manifest it by raps. '

" The raps were made clearly and distinctly.

" In the same way, Mr. Duesler ascertained that he was murdered in the east bedroom about five years ago, and that the murder was committed by a Mr. — on a Tuesday night at twelve o'clock ; that he was murdered by having his throat cut with a butcher's knife ; that the body was taken down to the cellar ; that it was not buried until the next night ; that it was taken through the buttery, down the stairway, and

that it was buried ten feet below the surface of the ground.

"It was also ascertained that he was murdered for his money, by raps affirmative.

"How much was it—one hundred ?

"No rap.

"Was it two hundred ? etc.—and when he mentioned five hundred the raps replied in the affirmative.

"Many called in who were fishing in the creek, and all heard the same questions and answers.

"Many remained in the house all night, but I and my children left. My husband remained with the Redfields.

"On the next Saturday, the house was filled to overflowing.

"There were no sounds heard during the day, but they commenced again in the evening. It was said that there were over three hundred persons present at the time.

"On Sunday the noises were heard throughout the day by all who came to the house.

"On Saturday night, April 1st, they commenced digging in the cellar ; they dug until they came to water, and then gave it up.

"The noises were not heard on Sunday evening nor during the night ; Stephen B. Smith, and his wife (my daughter Marie) and my son David S. Fox and his wife slept in the room this night.

"I have heard nothing since that time until yesterday.

"In the forenoon of yesterday, there were several rappings answered in the usual way. I have heard the noise several times to-day.

"I am not a believer in haunted houses or supernatural appearances ; I am very sorry there has been so much excitement about it. It has been a great deal of trouble to us. It was our misfortune to live here at this time, but I am willing and anxious that the truth should be known and that a true statement should be made.

"I cannot account for these noises ; all that I know

is that they have been heard repeatedly. I have heard the rapping again this (Tuesday) morning, April 4th. My children also heard it.

"I certify that the foregoing statement has been read to me, and that the same is true, and that I should be willing to take oath that it is so, if necessary.

" (Signed) MARGARET FOX.

" *April 11, 1848.*"

I have now to follow this statement by that of the husband of Mrs. Fox.

Mr. Fox deposed, April 11, 1848.

"I have heard the above statement of my wife, Margaret Fox, read, and hereby state and certify that the same is true in all its particulars

"I heard the same rappings which she has spoken of, in answer to the questions as stated by her. There have been a great many questions besides those asked and answered in the same way.

"Some have been asked a great many times and they have always received the same answers. There has never been any contradiction whatever.

"I do not know of any way to account for those noises, as being caused by any natural means. We have searched every nook and corner in and about the house, at different times, to ascertain, if possible, whether anything or anybody was secreted there that could make the noise, and have not been able to find anything which would or could explain the mystery. It has caused a great deal of trouble and anxiety.

"Hundreds have visited the house, so that it is impossible for us to attend our daily occupation; and I hope that whether caused by natural or supernatural means, it will be ascertained soon.

"The digging in the cellar will be resumed as soon as the water settles, and then it can be ascertained whether there are any indications of a body ever being buried there; and if there are, I shall have no doubt but that it is of supernatural origin."

It will be seen that Mr. and Mrs. Fox, with other

actors in the episode, considered this first psychic test of modern spiritualism as a pure instance of crime detection in which the aid of the supernatural intervened when all earthly chances of discovering it were gone.

For these historical statements of psychic history, I am indebted to the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *History of Spiritualism*, two classical volumes upon the subject, which no reader, or student, or interested party should miss reading.

Apropos the name of this great Englishman, I feel that I have a debt of gratitude to repay, while my pen writes down these lines.

When I commenced this work, I wrote stating my intention to several well-known people in public life. Some doubted the possibility of ever writing upon such an unknown theme as "Crime and the Supernatural"—but they nevertheless admired my "optimistic courage" in tackling the subject—and wished me success.

However, in the case of Lady Conan Doyle, with whom I also communicated the views were different. She wrote me—a total stranger—a letter of extreme courtesy, breadth of understanding and kindly encouragement that had the immediate effect of inspiring me to persevere in the task I had so vainly thought was easy to complete!

For task it has been! To all intents and purposes a trail which few pioneers have beaten; that is—when the phenomenon of psychics is associated or concerned with crime.

Therefore, if this work meets with any mark of popular interest I shall, in no small measure, conscientiously owe the fact to Lady Conan Doyle's heartening words of cheer.

In my clumsy blundering way I have attempted to go a little further along the "unknown trail" that the late Sir Arthur marked out in his views upon the psychic—"earthbound spirits"—and crime, as well as the power of psychometry in aid of future crime detection.

Miles and miles behind on the same isolated track I have attempted to grope, as I repeat, just a little further along the trail it was his possible intention to more masterfully explore had he been spared to do so.

CHAPTER XXVII

The "Hydesville episode" continued. Finding of the body. Some final observations about the occult. Is clairvoyance possible as an aid to future crime detection? Concluding opinion—finish!

I CONCLUDED in my last chapter of the Hydesville episode and its connection with the supernatural in crime with the statements of Mr. John Fox and his wife, Margaret Fox, who were the principal witnesses of this strange happening.

However, there were many other witnesses as well, as subsequent facts proved, who corroborated the psychic episode related. For instance, the statement of Mr. Duester who communicated by raps with this "earthbound spirit." Also that of the Hon. Robert Dale Owen, a member of the United States Congress and sometime American Minister to Naples, as well as Mr. David Fox, son of John Fox, Mr. Henry Bush, and Mr. Lyman Granger of Rochester. These three last-mentioned men resumed digging operations in the cellar. At a depth of five feet they came across a plank, charcoal and quicklime, also a pedlar's tin box, hair and bones pronounced by medical testimony to be human. However, it was not until many years later that the skeleton was unearthed.

It was a human skeleton of a man almost entire, found between the earth and cellar walls, no doubt that of the murdered hawker killed in the east room of this house in Hydesville. These bones, tin box, and old Hydesville House, scene of the crime of this murdered pedlar, are now in the county headquarters of the American Spiritualists, every brick of the place having been transported and reassembled as a memorial of this first great psychic manifestation, in which so foul a crime was the first test made to man in modern times.

It is simple to reconstruct the crime in all the light of subsequent findings and events :

The pedlar, victim !

Motive, robbery !

Crime, murder !

Action, burying body with quicklime in centre of the cellar.

Subsequent action, possible alarm at detection ; an interment then reburial by digging under the wall where the remains were more unlikely of discovery. A year later, in 1847, after the first digging, a Mrs. Lopa experienced the phenomenon of witnessing the murdered pedlar's ghost, known in occult language as " spirit manifestation " or " phantasm of the dead."

This apparition appeared to her in the same house in the astral form of a middle-aged man, dark eyes, dressed in grey pants, a black swallow-tail coat and black, peaked cap. Lucretia Pulier, a woman who saw the pedlar on the day of the night he was murdered, testified to this description being identical with the description of the pedlar in life as she recalled him.

This last-named witness seems to have some vital importance in the question of who was the unfortunate victim's murderer. It appeared she was a kind of daily help at this house in Hydesville during the tenancy of a Mr. and Mrs. Bell. This was in 1844, about four years prior to the rappings assuming such drastic proportions which culminated on the night of April 11th, 1848, as described in the statement of the Foxes. She described how a pedlar came to the house that day. He was invited to stop the night, her employers sending her home in the early evening. She spoke to the pedlar and was going to buy some articles from him, but her money was at home, so he said he would call next morning. He did not call, nor did she see him again.

Three days later (she usually went daily, but after the night of the pedlar's stay she was told in the morning she would not be required for another two days), Lucretia Pulier was sent for to resume work by Mrs. Bell.

Pulier stated that when she last saw the pedlar in Bell's house they told her he was an old friend of theirs. He was, in her opinion, a man about thirty-one to thirty-five years of age.

About a week later, Mrs. Bell sent her down to the cellar. It was dark and about the centre the earth gave under her feet so that she fell. In doing so she gave out a scream. Her mistress asked her why she screamed. Pulier told her the reason. It was laughed off by Mrs. Bell saying, "that the rats had been at work." Some few days later she saw Mr. Bell carrying a lot of dirt into the cellar. It was at night, and he worked like that for quite a long time, her mistress telling her that he, Mr. Bell, was filling up the rat holes.

Some time after this Mrs. Bell showed her a thimble she said had been bought off the pedlar, then three months later many other articles which she said that she (Mrs. Bell) had just purchased from the pedlar who had called on her again that day. It is a strange thing that this wandering pedlar was never seen alive again after Lucretia Pulier saw him for the last time in Bell's house—subsequent scene of the "Hydesville rappings." Nor was his family ever traced. No doubt this was due to the fact that his name was misunderstood by the listeners when the spirit communication was rapped out for earthly interpretation.

Now in what respects can clairvoyance for the future be enlisted on the side of man to aid in crime detection? As a science, it is unquestionably "debatable phenomena," for its ethics cannot be said to work out like the known anticipations which come from normal human faculties. To expect clairvoyance in murder cases to be successful when all known human efforts have failed is, on the face of all reasoning, out of the question.

But with the history of the ages teeming with inexplicable matters, the common-sense question arises, is this phenomena understood? That is the crux of the whole thing in a nutshell—is it understood? Resorting to occult methods as a last resort in a case of mystery is asking too much from an enlightened,

materialistic world, for it is not consistent with human nature to accept others as having "powers" denied to the general run of humanity. Such "powers" seem to smack of primitiveness, of mysticism, in fact of the supernatural. Whether all this, in time, will be overcome, is beyond any man at present to forecast.

Whether science will discover that physics and the ether are one and the same, that they are the beginning and end of all things, that which lies behind and, indeed, make possible the existence of our physical life and mind, still lies in the realms of uncertainty and yet remains to be proved. As it stands, such phenomena are looked upon as supernatural.

Supernatural! This one word intrigues all human imagination. Supernatural! That which is unearthly, weird, eerie or mysterious. Defined in the dictionary as that which happens beyond the powers or laws of nature. In fact, a state or phenomenon that is of us, about us, and with us, which can only be studied or experienced to be admitted, understood or definitely accepted.

Therefore, owing to see a person after death in "etheric" or "spirit shape" as claimed by occult students is supernatural and requires an immense amount of proof to establish belief in such phenomena. For human nature being what it is compels us to resist all things and propositions which do not consist with our reasoning minds, it being the line of least resistance, or the easiest way, to discredit things we do not understand.

But just how far in the year 1935—and we have advanced enormously—as instance the wireless, the advent of television, the scientific dawn looking towards further knowledge of the miraculous ether,—etc.—just how far are we in the direction of knowledge to state, with any degree of certainty, what is—with our present advancement beyond the supernatural—the state claimed as beyond the powers or laws of nature.

True, deep and scientific study of clairvoyance or the occult is not spiritualism. It stands for something far more powerful. Spiritualism is only a form of

religion of this phenomena, but it is a step covering over seventy-five years in the right direction. For it is sympathetic to the study of the "etheric" or occult—and in this way is always associated with it.

Sincere students of the occult claim—and quite rightly—it is, as yet, not even dimly or remotely understood. In precisely the same manner as the uninitiated will quite willingly accept the presence of a "sixth sense" without even having the slightest idea how it conforms to their most boasted sense of reason.

In this direction comes the ever-changing mind of man. At one moment all that is lofty, brilliant and intelligent; and the next, incredible, hostile, stubborn in conception and in many cases intolerably stupid.

However, the only consolation to all of open mind is sound judgment—and faith. For it must be admitted that in a living world comprising Asia, Europe and the Orient, Africa, North Africa, Oceania, and America—is *life* as we know it.

Science, so far, has proved no life beyond this planetary system of ours. Therefore, the seven races of mankind of approximately eight hundred and forty-nine million, five hundred thousand human minds give cause for deep reflection that there is still much to learn about what we admit is "unknown," mysterious or supernatural.

Therefore, as clairvoyance or the occult is the study or practice of that which is beyond the powers or laws of nature—and has been, since the dawn of all human existence—it is not out of place to associate such application to the one great moral code of humanity commonly known as crime.

To achieve such results at present there is only one known channel, that of clairvoyancy—and so far, only one type of person to carry it out—the clairvoyant.

Is it possible? Can it be done? There is a trend of modern thought getting stronger and stronger that claims it can. I am not in the position to say yes, also I am not in a position to say no. Much rather would I say—given more knowledge, it can be done. For

in my crowded life I have known and seen some things which I am now convinced were beyond the powers or laws of man to understand—and for this sole decision, which is my own, reserve any definite pronouncement, as strangely enough *reason* remains unsatisfied.

That brilliant writer, "Vanoc II," aptly conveys the idea of what I mean by his following inimitable style in the history of mankind: "The new will always be assailed, persecuted and mocked. Dorsay points out that the man who first opened an umbrella in Philadelphia was arrested. The man who first drove a saw-mill by water-power in England was mobbed. The inventors of telegraphs and railroads were called mad. George III said the lightning conductor was impious. Harvey, who discovered and demonstrated the circulation of blood, was called 'crack-brained.' Lister, father of antiseptic surgery, was black-balled by the London Surgical Society. The first English railway was passionately denounced in the House of Commons." As well as the first formation of our present day London Metropolitan Police by the late Sir Robert Peel, in 1829.

The ever-advancing mind of man, in the shape of science, will decide to-day's doubts by to-morrow's certainties. All is in the womb of time!

Therefore, in the conclusion of this book, can it be put forward that the occult or clairvoyance is slowly fighting its way to recognition? Can it in the long run justify its fight? Many think it can!

In the realms of crime it has shown many strange happenings. But they are the results of something inexplicable, something which man recognizes, admits—but will not accept until it is explainable. Will this time ever come?

My readers will form their own views. For my part I have an open mind. Time adjudicates upon all things! settles all things! In the long run this ever-eternal factor will decide.

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